IN LEAGUE WITH THE POWERFUL

L. J. Cross
Akron Iowa.

In League with the Powerful.

By EUGENIA D. BIGHAM.

CHAPTER I.

HOW THE RIPLEYS CONQUERED.

ONE of the happiest homes I ever knew was that of the Ripleys, in a small town near New York City. To visit the family made one feel happier for days afterward. Mr. and Mrs. Ripley were young people. They had married only because they loved each other. They were rich, were blessed with health, and were mutually agreed as to the charms of their home, their baby boy, and even their Chinese servant. Best of all, they were Christians in every sense of that word. So they had a good many reasons for being happy. I went to see them one day and found them eagerly discussing plans for Mr. Ripley's long-desired vacation. He told me that he meant to take his wife and baby, and Loo-Fong, and go on a long journey, resting some weeks at San Francisco, and not returning for several months. I knew how I would miss them, and so was with them almost every day until they left. Even now my heart holds a picture of all four faces smiling at me from the windows of the vanishing train; the baby, only four months old, in the arms of the Chinaman who was to be nurse and assistant-in-general during the trip. I am sure no one ever had a kinder or more capable servant than Loo-Fong. Moreover, he was thoroughly devoted to the Ripley family, and to baby Malcolm in particular.

Mr. Ripley was very fond of steamer travel, and Mrs. Ripley wanted to test it, so the journey was to be partly on water. Everything seemed to favor their plans, and they enjoyed every mile of the way until

Copyright, 1899, by David C. Cook Publishing Company.

they had almost reached the port for which they were bound. Then an accident, the nature of which they never fully understood, happened to some part of the steamer's machinery, and the passengers became greatly alarmed. The captain reassured them, telling them the distance to port was so short that the "Aldarian" could land them there in perfect safety, crippled as she was. He probably told them nothing but the truth. But in a few hours a sudden storm arose, and then even the captain said the peril was very great. He commanded every precaution to be made and made at once, and the passengers obeyed with exceeding haste, many of them almost frantic with fright.

Mr. and Mrs. Ripley were calm through all the commotion, and Mr. Ripley was thus able to act with nerve and prudence. Standing close together, the little family group presented by far the most serene view to be seen.

A boat, almost full, was waiting to receive them, and Mr. Ripley helped his wife to descend to her place in it. Then turning, he reached out his arms to take his baby from the Chinaman. But, just as he touched the child, a man crazed with fear rushed between the two and with wonderful agility made good his way into the boat. But he had knocked against Mr. Ripley with so much force that the young father was unable to regain his balance. Throwing out his arms, he fell overboard, sinking within an oar's-length of the boat.

The Chinaman held to the baby and peered through the partial darkness, no doubt feeling that the doom of the little one, as well as his own doom, was sealed. He saw the boat push off from the steamer, rescue Mr. Ripley and go on, tossing perilously, and leaving him helpless.

Mr. Ripley's enforced plunge into the water did not efface his knowledge that his baby boy was left on board the ill-fated steamer, and as he struggled to regain control of his faculties, this and his wife's grief retarded his success. He heard her begging the men in the boat to go back for her baby; and he heard a calm, manly voice reasoning with her. As for him, he knew it would be foolhardy to try to return to the steamer. And yet, how precious was one little life aboard that vessel! It almost made the father lose consciousness to think that his little one might sink in the angry waters, while he, a strong man, was comparatively safe, and utterly unable to reach out a helping hand. He also thought regretfully of poor Loo-Fong, though glad that the baby was in the Chinaman's care.

Mr. Ripley was not in the same part of the boat with his wife. He longed to be near her, near enough to put his hand over her hands, which he felt sure were locked, in the tortures she was enduring; near enough to speak to her. But he could not endanger the lives of all in the boat by trying to get to her. Not until day dawned did he find it possible to reach a position at his wife's side. By that time the storm had somewhat subsided, and the miserable-looking people in the boat peered into each other's faces almost hopelessly. Possibly the same thought flashed through each mind: "We may all soon perish."

Cramped and wet and hungry, they lived through the long morning, and felt the first gladness of hope at about three o'clock in the afternoon, when the rain ceased. They themselves were the only visible living objects, look which way they would; and yet they were living — not hurried to th awful death which some of their recent companions had doubtless met. Sunbeams struggling through rifted clouds touched their wan faces, and seemed an augury of good.

Not much longer were they helpless. Before night a steamer was sighted, and their signals of distress were quickly noticed. Their rescue was accomplished with ease, and once aboard they saw others of the

"Aldarian's" passengers. Others, but not baby Malcolm or his faithful nurse. As soon as their absence was certain, Mr. Ripley almost carried his sobbing wife to a lounge in the grand saloon.

More than one mother lingered near, having heard the story of the missing child, and longing to do something to comfort the young parents. Some even addressed words to the mother. But their gentle kindness won no response. Her sudden and intense grief had darkened her spirit and silenced her voice, except for the low sobbing. Mr. Ripley sat by her, seeking to find some way to give comfort out of his sore heart tortured by self-condemnings.

The garments of both were wet from the long exposure to the storm, and they made a pitiable sight in their grief. Other passengers offered to supply them with dry clothing, but they were too stricken with grief to do more than thank them, Mr. Ripley ever and anon passing his hand back and forth over his wife's brow. It was saddest when a shudder would shake his own frame, and he would bury his face in his hands and remain quiet for a minute or more. It was after such a silence that he drew closer to the lounge, saying:

"Lucy, can you listen? There is One who knows just where our little one is. He is our God. And if our baby is alive, he is able to care for him though we are not. We have told God about our trouble; let us feel that he will seek to bring only good out of it all. Knowing his love, let us try to rest in hope about our Malcolm. Are you listening, dear?"

There was an inclination of the head on the pillow, and all felt that something else than despair was taking possession of the mother. Mr. Ripley felt that it was hope, hope in God; for, like an electric current, the same feeling had nerved his own heart a moment before he spoke to her. But even as the thought cheered him, his wife wailed out in her grief, "Oh, Harmon, if we had only stayed at home! Then our baby would be with us yet!"

"We cannot know that, Lucy," he said very gently. "Think of the sicknesses which come to people who seem the most safely sheltered."

"Yes, but then we might have come overland instead of by water. Oh, why didn't we!"

Her words woke afresh the thoughts that had tortured her husband, and, again hiding his face in his hands, he shook with emotion. Why had he not been more watchful when he stood on the steamer — more careful? Then that crazed man could not have pushed him from his footing, and he could have saved his baby. Was it not his fault, all his?

The people waiting near looked at each other in anxiety; for, added to Mrs. Ripley's sobs, were those of the strong man bowed before them. "This is terrible!" one said. "Can't somebody comfort them?"

There was no response to this save tearful eyes and quivering lips.

After a few moments the father again controlled his grief. "Lucy," he said, "I am sure we did that which we thought was best, and whatever happens, God will seek to bring the best out of it all. Let us hope. I know you believe with me that the best human love is not one millionth part so kind, tender, or full of power as God's love. And we know he loves us — you and me, and little Malcolm; yes, and Loo-Fong. Surely this thought can help us, and does help us, in our extremity. Even our helpless one is clothed about with this love. And, Lucy, when we reach San Francisco, little Malcolm may be there awaiting us. Or another steamer may soon bring him there. Remember Loo-Fong knows where we were going, and he would never desert little Malcolm."

"I am sure he would not," Mrs. Ripley answered. "We will wait in San Francisco if they are not there to meet us. And,

Harmon, we must try to be well and strong if our little one is given back to us. You were in the water last night, and must change your wet clothes, and so must I."

Her words met an instant response from several, who hurried forward to offer assistance. After a minute or two she went with one of the ladies to her stateroom, and soon both she and Mr. Ripley were provided with all they needed.

After that, they controlled their grief in the presence of others, and God comforted them. There were some on the steamer who watched the suffering father and mother closely, and learned for the first time how the Christian faith can sustain in sore straits. Thus, unconsciously, good seed was scattered, and the harvest is not yet.

In the meantime the steamer moved on towards San Francisco, the same port for which the "Aldarian" had been bound, and I am sure there was not a passenger aboard but would have shouted with vociferous delight could he have seen, a number of miles away, a sight which was both ludicrous and pathetic. Poor Loo-Fong, the Chinaman, sat astride a barrel, holding close in his arms Mr. Ripley's baby. As far as vision could reach, the Pacific was without moving objects except for the stout barrel and its widely-dissimilar human burdens. The Chinaman had doubled the infant's long clothing backward and upward, making it answer the purpose of a wrap, and the rich laces which ornamented the skirts fell like cap-ruffles about the little sleeper's face.

Ever and anon the Chinaman's eyes would cease gazing over the waters, and would look kindly down at the little one, while he would say aloud, "Me sabee! Me takee to boss man! He be proud, proud!"

There was a happy pride in the very sound of Loo-Fong's voice, for he felt sure that he would somehow be rescued, and would go in triumph to restore the baby to its mourning parents. He never doubted that they themselves would reach San Francisco. Mr. Ripley seemed to the Chinaman a man with power to do wonderful things; a man who won every desire of his heart.

Serenely the almond eyes surveyed the calm waters, the barrel wabbling on in its uncertain course, and the child still sleeping. And, as Mr. and Mrs. Ripley did, we will trust them to the never-failing, ever-watchful Love, and wait for further news of them.

The steamer that had rescued so many of the "Aldarian's" passengers bore them safely to San Francisco, and some of them found waiting friends. In a day or two others of the wrecked steamer's crew and passengers were landed, though the ones the Ripleys most longed to see were not among any of the arrivals. Mr. Ripley haunted the wharf for weeks, and sent advertisements far and near. After that, he gave up hope and prepared to go back home. His faith in God's love was still as clear as it had been when he lifted up the drooping heart of his wife, and so neither of them was utterly cast down when they left the city towards which they had started with such glad feelings.

Reaching New York, and shrinking from entering their home, they decided to make a visit to Mrs. Ripley's sister, Mrs. Kirtman, whom they both loved, though they had not seen her since their marriage. Mrs. Kirtman, who was fully ten years older than Mrs. Ripley, lived in Overbrook, Pennsylvania, a small town near the famous Mauch Chunk region, grand in scenery. She was as lovely in her nature as was the valley in which her whole life so far had been spent.

The Kirtman home, at the west of Overbrook, on a decided rise of ground, was one of solid comfort. Standing outside and viewing its surfaces and angles, its dull paint and steep roof, one would not have been charmed; but going into the house and mingling with its inmates, made most visitors declare that there must be a charm in the very chairs.

From any window, whichever way one looked, was a beautiful scene, summer or winter; while from the front porch, unusually spacious for that region, the view pleased even those who did not care particularly for the picturesque. Unbroken, except by a wide, graveled walk, the lawn began at the front steps and sloped gently for some distance to the margin of a stream of clear water, spanned by a bridge which appeared to be exactly even with the front door of the dwelling. A few large trees dotted the lawn, and under each was a bench. Glancing in any direction from the upper part of the lawn, the other homes of the town appeared to be resting in clumps of beautiful trees, in dells, or on low hills, the waters of the stream showing in the most unexpected places, and the whole being hemmed in by a chain of distant mountains.

When the Ripleys reached this quiet and beautiful place, they felt that they had come to a haven where their sore hearts might recover, soothed by Nature, and by human as well as Divine love. They could open their hearts to Mrs. Kirtman about their lost child as they had not been able to open them hitherto; and I am sure all of us can understand how sweet was the comfort which came in the glances, handclasps and low words of those dear ones.

Probably there were few at Overbrook who had not heard of the supposed fate of little Malcolm Ripley before the arrival in the town of his parents, known to many of the people. The sympathy felt was real, and the stricken parents soon knew it. They had a great many visitors, even pompous Judge Rayfold and his wife calling on them. The Rayfolds, also, had lost their only child, though not at sea, and their hand-clasps, close and strong, expressed more than their words.

"How very kind the people are!" Mrs. Ripley exclaimed. "They do not say much about our little one, but all the way through my heart I feel that they would like to comfort me. There is Mrs. McAwtry, for instance. She sent womanly little Marion to see me, because she herself is too feeble to come. I wonder if she ever will be well?"

"I fear not," Mrs. Kirtman answered. Then she added brightly, "Dr. Chellway is coming to-night, Lucy; he and Mis' Dolly."

"When I see them, I fear I shall break down," was the not wholly unexpected reply. "They are such old friends, and the doctor's heart is so big and outspoken! Somehow I dread to see his blue eyes look into mine, because I feel sure they will fill with tears, and he will not be able to speak until he has controlled them. Dear, homely old fellow! I wonder if there is another Dr. Chellway in all the world?"

"All you women call Chellway a homely man," Mr. Kirtman said. "I do not. He has a fine figure, tall, and large in proportion."

"Yes; but small blue eyes, light hair and a florid complexion seldom make a person handsome," Mrs. Ripley responded. "I do not think his lack of beautiful features can ever harm him, though. I am sure every human being who knows him well loves him, and he will have to get a new nature out and out before people can have any other feeling for him."

Several weeks passed in this pleasant spot, and the Ripleys felt that they ought no longer to shun going to their own home, desolate as it would seem. So they went away, bravely, almost cheerfully, mindful that they could not leave God's love behind, or go where his tender care would not be over them.

The years came and went until twelve had been numbered. This brings us to a time when Overbrook becomes of great interest to us, for it is the time when three of our principal characters meet there: Juvernia Vann, Max Anthon, and the Spaniard, Bernardo.

Before they meet, however, I propose that you become acquainted with them in their

own homes, widely separated, and very different.

Before leaving Overbrook, we will go to the top of the town hall, as all visitors are expected to do, and see the very fine view of the place obtained from that point of vantage. The town is long in shape, narrow, and occupies part of a valley which is more or less undulating. The stream before mentioned zigzags the length of the valley, and crosses and re-crosses the town, making a delightful, purling sound as it travels over the stones and sand banks and roots in its course. Its banks are either sandy or grassy to the very margin of the water, and oak and maple trees adorn these banks, throwing cool shadows in the heated season, and looking bleak and bare in winter. Arched foot-bridges span the stream at many places, its windings in and out of the town making these necessary. And, since in rainy seasons the water rises rapidly and becomes dangerous, two strong wagon-bridges are placed at crossings most used by vehicles.

I am sure the town was never planned, for there is no regularity of streets, and every house seems to have a different design from that of its neighbor, as if built at widely different times and by new-comers. People bought land and built homes wherever they fancied the slope of the ground or the trend of the stream, and seldom is a fence seen.

The west length of the town is close against a long, heavily-wooded hill, and is decidedly the most beautiful part of the place, and the most interesting, containing some of the finest homes, the three churches, the bold spring, the cress-brook, and the cave.

The spring issues from a rocky, cavern-like opening at the base of the hill, and its waters form the brook, which is literally covered with cress in its season, the current parting the greenery almost exactly in the middle. Looking like a silver ribbon in the midst of softest green, this brook follows the hill, and, emerging from the grove near one of the churches, empties into the larger stream. The cave, the wonder of the town, is just over the spring, its entrance about half way up the hill. A wide, winding drive has been cut in the hill, leading to the cave's entrance, which is guarded by a light wicket gate and a lock, no one being allowed to enter the cavern without a guide.

The Kirtman home is in this part of the town, and looks almost exactly as it did more than twelve years ago, when Mr. and Mrs. Ripley visited here after the loss of little Malcolm. Since then Mr. Kirtman has died, but five young people keep the mother's heart sunny and patient and her spirit brave. And no home could be doleful with such a mother at its head. She and her family are to take a prominent part in the strengthening of the character of a young girl now utterly unconscious of their existence. Nor do they know aught of her. Yet they are to meet in a most natural way, and wonderful influences are to result — influences to be felt in many lives.

CHAPTER II.

JUVERNIA CAUSES A DISTURBANCE.

MANY miles from the mountain-girt town of Overbrook, in her beautiful home at Baltimore, a young girl, Juvernia Vann, holds a position both interesting and amusing. While she is a veritable little queen in the family, she is also a bone of contention between her parents, her mother being controlled by a desire to see her become a genuine "society girl," and the father wishing her to grow naturally into a large-souled woman.

Doubtless there are some people in Baltimore to-day who remember an intensely

warm Saturday in the latter part of May, 18—, its like not having been known for twenty years previous. It was in the mid-afternoon of that day that an angry old negro woman turned a corner and started briskly up Eutaw Place, one of the leading residence streets of the city. As she went, she shook her head, muttering to herself in a perturbed manner.

"I is sho' gwine to tell on Miss Juvernia dis time!" she said. "I never is been so upsot in all my bawn days befo', and I's gwine jes' as straight home as I kin walk, and tell her ma."

Juvernia.

The publicity of the place was no check upon old Cynthy's tongue. To talk aloud to herself was a habit of long standing, and she paid small heed to the few pedestrians who were abroad at that hour. Pretty soon, however, an acquaintance hailed her and promptly overtook her.

"Hi, Cynthy! You 'pears to be in a fume," said the new-comer, enjoying the old woman's disquietude.

"Call it what yo's a mind to. But I is jest clean wore out wif Miss Juvernia, and dat's what is ailin' me!" Cynthy responded.

"An' who in the land o' the livin' is Miss Juvernia? She is got name enough, sho'."

"You shet up, nigger!" was Cynthy's indignant warning. "She is my white folks' onliest chile, and I loves her jest de same as if 'Mancipation Day never was come. 'Cause I loves her is why I is all worked up 'bout her. I tell yo', cur'ous ain't de word for Miss Juvernia. She do give us a sight o' trouble. Her ma gits fretted nigh to def at her onnatural ways; but I is boun' to say her pa mos'ly laughs at her."

"An' what do she do?"

"Better ax me what don't she do!" puffed Cynthy. "I tell you what's de troof—dat chile can 'commodate herse'f to any pusson what walks dese streets, and she's plum' fearless. She don't keer who pokes fun at her. She kin be jes' as much to home wif po' folks as wif rich ones, and I jes' nacherly despises po' white trash. Ef she's dressed up a-settin' alongside her ma in de kerridge, she looks jes' as fine-folksy as even

her ma kin. Den put her wif her pa and she's as free and sociable as he is. And ag'in, ef she's in de kitchen a-rollin' out little pies wif me, you'd think she is my fust cousin, she's dat intrusted in all my affairs. But sho! I is clean wore out wif her now, — and also dis is home; I leaves you here."

"But wait! You ain't telled me what de chile is gone and done," said her companion.

"No, and I ain't a-gwine tell you," Cynthy said. "I ain't jest egzactly decided to tell anybody 'bout Blondy Cap yet — may not tell her ma." And Cynthy hurried on through a side entrance and around the elegant house, leaving her mystified acquaintance to make what she could of the situation.

In the cool of the evening Juvernia came home, and, on entering the hall, heard a hearty voice calling to her:

"Is that you, Blondy Cap? Come here and report!" said the voice.

Juvernia ran nimbly into the sitting-room and perched herself on an arm of her father's chair, her trim little figure being none too heavy.

She gave him an animated description of the afternoon's happenings, and Cynthy's name several times rang out amid merry laughter, Mr. Vann seeming to enjoy it all exceedingly.

"But what do you suppose your mother is going to say to all this?" he finally asked.

A cloud passed over the sunny light in Juvernia's eyes.

"She won't like it, I'm afraid," she said. "Did I do anything wrong, father?"

"Nothing that I call wrong," he answered. "We will try to make mother think as we do, for I am intensely interested in your poor family and don't want to lose sight of them."

Mrs. Randolph Vann was one of the most aristocratic ladies in Baltimore, and she knew it and was proud of it. Because of this pride she became to many people a lady as far removed from them as if altogether unknown. So it was that only few knew of the possibilities of her nature, and doubtless no one but her husband even suspected the good of which her heart was capable. Her daughter, Juvernia, was at once her greatest joy and her greatest grief, and the girl would early have developed into a very different character had she been left entirely to her mother's influence. But Mr. Vann always insisted on having a word in the management of their one child; and though his word generally differed very materially from his wife's word, it was quite as effectual in influencing Juvernia. He felt very sure that his wife would not want any continuation of what Juvernia had done that afternoon, but he also knew that he was sometimes very successful in overcoming her scruples, and he hoped to be so in the present case.

The gentleman had a much harder task than he anticipated, however, for Mrs. Vann had heard an excited account of the affair from Cynthy long before the young girl came home. The lady was a trifle more stately in her manner when presiding at the tea table, and was decidedly preoccupied during the early part of the evening, but as soon as Juvernia said good-night and went away, she put down her book and turned impressively to her husband.

"Mr. Vann," she said, "what do you think Juvernia did this afternoon, in the broad daylight, on one of the principal streets of the city?"

"Nothing terrible, I hope. What was it?" asked the gentleman questioned, laying aside his newspaper, and deciding that his wife had heard from some unadmiring source of what had occurred.

"I myself would have known nothing about it," said Mrs. Vann, disregarding his question, "were it not that Cynthy overtook Juvernia near the City Hall — think of it! — carrying a huge bundle and talking delightedly with an ill-clad girl who limped along at her side. Of course Cynthy took the

bundle at once and was about to give it to the rightful bearer, when Juvernia snatched it back and declared that 'Emmie should not carry it one step.' Cynthy could do nothing with her, and at last had to go along and bear the bundle, though the trip took her considerably out of her way. She says the child lives in a small, mean-looking house in a shabby neighborhood. Simply because she had carelessly cut her foot on broken glass, Juvernia must needs help her home. Now I want her to be kind, but this way she has of doing unheard-of things, Juvernia must give up. It is unbecoming!"

Here Mrs. Vann paused, doubtless for lack of breath.

"I do not call it unbecoming to help the unfortunate, Ophelia," Mr. Vann said. "The unwise thing is that Juvernia went into the house. Disease might have been there. And she should have been with her friend, where you thought she was, instead of out in the heat."

"But, Mr. Vann, she was unwise in other ways. Why, she actually made herself very friendly with the people, and promised to go there again! She knows perfectly well how seriously I object to associates beneath her, though I do believe the child thinks no one beneath her — absolutely no one. She is the veriest little democrat I ever saw."

"Yes, she is," assented Mr. Vann, and there was a pleased tone in his voice that made his wife eye him questioningly. But he looked steadily at his boots, flicking first one and then the other with his handkerchief, perfectly aware of the lady's scrutiny. After a moment of silence he went on: "You are right, Ophelia; Blondy Cap is not a respecter of persons, and is very apt to forget herself when some one else needs help. I do not believe she ever takes thought as to whether or not the acquaintance may be kept up in the future, or whether the person is rich or poor. I myself will inquire into this case, however, and determine about the acquaintance."

"I will save you that trouble," said Mrs. Vann, stiffly. "I have already decided the question, and I say it shall not be kept up. When I began this conversation, Mr. Vann, I took it for granted that you were in your proper senses."

"And so I am," he answered. "You remember, Ophelia, you promised me to let the child grow naturally, like a flower." His voice was slightly reproachful.

"Yes, I did; but I did not promise to let her grow like a weed," was the quick retort.

"Nor do I want her to grow that way. I only say it is wisdom to understand a matter before pronouncing judgment. The fact that this child is poor is no reason why she is not a fit associate for Juvernia. You know my father was poor, a carpenter, and yet —"

"Now, Mr. Vann, if you are going to begin on that, I shall leave!" interrupted Mrs. Vann, rising. "We are rich, if you will allow the term, and I say Juvernia must associate with her equals in position and wealth."

She was walking gracefully to the door, for Mrs. Vann was always graceful, when a servant announced Mr. Burkart.

This gentleman was Mr. Vann's business partner, and he had called on very important business. He had received intelligence which made it necessary that one of the partners should go to France to attend to business that would probably consume six months. There were reasons why Mr. Burkart could not go, and why Mr. Vann should go. The discussion of plans became very engrossing, and Mrs. Vann soon forgot her displeasure of a few minutes previous, especially as it was proposed that she should accompany her husband. The suggestion would have been accepted on the instant but for Juvernia. It was not thought best to let her go; but where to place her for the six months was a puzzle, the Vanns not having any near relatives.

"What did you name her Juvernia for,

anyway?" asked Mr. Burkart, laughingly, as though the name were responsible for the present dilemma.

"Oh, well, just because my wife admired the name," Mr. Vann responded. "I told her at the time that it might as well be Jupiter, and I called her Jupiter for several weeks."

He and Mr. Burkart laughed so heartily at this that even Mrs. Vann smiled.

"No wonder you can't decide where to leave her — a girl with two such names as she has — Juvernia and Blondy Cap," said Mr. Burkart. "I suppose, Vann, you are responsible for the latter name?"

"Yes, I am. And it's quite appropriate, too," affirmed Mr. Vann. "Just remember that heavy blonde hair she has, if you please. Why, Blondy Cap is exactly the name for her."

"No doubt," said Mr. Burkart. "But I must go. You two settle this vexed question as promptly as you can, and accept my wish that you will find a charming stopping-place for the young lady."

Mr. Vann had to spend the next day at Sparrows' Point, a place far down the river, and when he came home at twilight he was in a jubilee of good humor, because he had fixed on just the place at which Juvernia could spend the six months.

It is easily guessed that the place was Overbrook.

CHAPTER III.

JUVERNIA AND THE KIRTMANS.

MR. VANN was as full of self-congratulation as a boy who has won a prize, and at the tea table the family talked of nothing but his plan for Juvernia.

"I doubt if I would have remembered the place had I not overheard a scrap of conversation held between two men on the boat this afternoon," said Mr. Vann. "But the moment I heard the name 'Overbrook,' I felt that our problem was solved. The men were talking of the rare beauty of the town. You remember it, don't you, Ophelia?"

"I certainly do," Mrs. Vann responded with pleasant emphasis. "It is just the place for Juvernia."

"But, father, you and mother are having all the enjoyment to yourselves," objected Juvernia. "I do not know a thing about that far-away town, and it is I who will have to go there."

Merry twinkles wrinkled Mr. Vann's face at the outer corners of his eyes. "Oh, you will never object to the town, Blondy Cap!" he said. "It is a place where everything is absolutely lovely, and only people are otherwise — though I have not a word to say against the people. They are very nice. Your mother boarded there several months before our marriage, and I went to see her occasionally. Say, Ophelia, do you suppose Juvernia will meet that rosy doctor who used to be forever crossing our path when we went walking in the twilight?"

A ripple of laughter floated on the air, as Mrs. Vann said, "Of course she will meet him. Why, the child meets every uncommon person that ever comes in her vicinity. But dear me! When have I thought of that rosy doctor until this moment? And, Mr. Vann, do you remember Mrs. Kirtman's home? What do you think of asking her to take charge of Juvernia? You know the house is likely to be cool and healthful."

"Yes, it is. And I remember Mrs. Kirtman distinctly. She is the very lady I myself first thought of," Mr. Vann said, heartily. "I even asked the two gentlemen about her. They said she is a widow now and has five children to care for, so I suppose she will not object to making some money as an extra. Of course I expect to pay well, for I mean to stipulate that whoever takes charge of Blondy Cap shall assume entire care of her."

By this time Juvernia's face was brighter, and she said, "I would be hard to please if the thought of a lovely town and a home with five children in it could not make me feel better than I did a moment ago."

"I do hope Mrs. Kirtman will say yes. Then for once in your life you will be gratified about living with children," the father said. "But I think the two eldest children need scarcely enter into your calculations, as they must be older than you, and quite beyond you, I suppose. There will be no discount on anything else, though. You can learn to row on the large stream and eat cress from the small one. Even if you should fall into the water you could scramble out without help, except after a heavy rain. Then there's the mill-race! Why, it's the place of places for a good time. You will come back home as rosy as the doctor!" and Mr. Vann laughed aloud.

"I am going to meet that doctor," Juvernia declared. "And I believe I shall like him, too."

"Why, there's no manner of doubt about it," her mother said. "You always like queer people, you know. I only hope he will not find a chance to put his ideas of religion into your brain."

"Well, now, I rather like his ideas of religion," Mr. Vann said quickly. "They are just like my mother's, and she was my ideal Christian."

"I never knew your mother," Mrs. Vann said, with a little of the stiffness which meant displeasure. She added immediately, "Suppose you write to Mrs. Kirtman tonight. I shall not feel at ease until I know where Juvernia is to stay."

Mr. Vann was willing enough to hasten the proposed letter, and so, after writing it, he posted it at once, that there might be no unnecessary delay.

This letter reached Overbrook duly, and Terry Kirtman took it from the office, and looked critically at the business address stamped on the envelope. Then he went straight home, not even pausing to talk with the parrot on the hotel porch. This deserves special mention, for Terry and the bird were boon friends. The hotel-keeper said that Terry had educated the parrot and was responsible for every word it uttered, though I think his assertion too sweeping.

Terry ran up the drive, and bounded up the front steps at home, handing the letter to his mother with a great show of eagerness.

"It's from Baltimore!" he exclaimed. "And, mother, it has the address of a lawyer on one corner. I do hope some one who had to die anyhow has left us a fortune."

"Be thoughtful, my son. That does not sound unselfish," Mrs. Kirtman said, glancing at his face.

"Didn't mean a thing wrong," Terry asserted. "You know I said if the person had to die anyhow. Why, mother, if we had a fortune, Hugh could go to college, and I could have a horse."

"Doubtless," his mother answered, forced to smile at the two widely dissimilar blessings. Then she opened the letter, and read it with interest very plainly to be seen on her fair, thin face.

"No one has left us a fortune," she said, finally, all her children waiting for her words, for the family were gathered on the porch according to the warm-weather custom of the place. "But the letter speaks of what may prove a fortunate thing for us. It is written by a gentleman I used to know, and he wants me to take entire charge of his only child during six months that he and his wife may have to spend in France."

"How old is this 'only child'?" asked Hugh, who felt himself almost a man.

"Mr. Vann does not tell me," his mother said, looking again at the letter. "He offers me thirty dollars a month; but wants me to let her be like one of the family. And listen how he speaks of her. He says: 'She is a girl who makes every one the happier for

her presence, and you need not hesitate to take her into your family circle.'"

"Pshaw! Of course he thinks that. I wouldn't take her!" Terry exclaimed. "She is an airy little girl, I know, and spoiled. A rich man's only child, and a girl! I say deliver me from the infliction!" He made a wry face and dropped down on the top step beside a delicate-looking boy of about ten years who held a violin.

"Terry Kirtman, you don't know a thing about her, not a single thing!" exclaimed one of his sisters, a girl with large, bright brown eyes like his own. "You don't like it because she is a girl. If she were a boy, you would want her to come. Mother, do take her! I get so lonesome sometimes, for Ellna is no company to me since she has begun to consider herself a young lady. I mean she doesn't join in my plays."

Mrs. Kirtman looked from the quiet, gentle Ellna to the animated, plump younger sister, Della, and smiled. But Hugh said decisively:

"It is my opinion that thirty dollars a month would help us along a good deal. Even Terry might put up with an airy girl for that amount. Don't you think so, Ellna?"

"Yes; and I say let her come," Ellna answered. "Somehow I feel that she will be lovely."

"If Ellna says let her come, so do I," said Julian, the boy with the violin. "You know, mother," he added, earnestly, "if a stranger is here, we can get up a party to go through the cave, and the old keeper will make some money."

Every one except Mrs. Kirtman laughed heartily, Della clapping her hands.

But the boy's mother said, "Never mind, dear; mother understands. The old cave-keeper has been having a hard time, and he will be glad of a crowd. If the girl comes, you and I will drum up a big party, for I love to see people happy about, as much as you do."

The sensitive face of the boy brightened, for the laughter at his remark had made him feel that he had said something very unusual, and wide of the mark. His was the sweetest spirit in the home circle, and to think of the good of others seemed as natural to him as to breathe.

It was fortunate for Juvernia that her mother did not know the Kirtman family, or she would have been as averse to putting her daughter within its influence as within Dr. Chellway's. But that lady had lost sight of the home in her anxiety about the house. She knew that Juvernia, if there, would be in a healthful and pleasant locality. She knew that the Kirtman family was highly respectable, and thought no more of the possible influence of its members on her daughter. Fortunately, Juvernia could no more have lived in the Kirtman home without becoming purer thereby, than a plant could live in a favorable climate and not grow more healthy.

The discussion that the letter caused ended in a decision to take the proposed boarder, and a reply to that effect was at once forwarded to Mr. Vann, giving him intense satisfaction. Then, in both homes, busy preparations were begun, Mrs. Vann issuing orders for others to execute, while Mrs. Kirtman herself took an active part in the labors going on under her roof.

It was decided that the front room opposite the parlor should be Juvernia's, and such another overhauling and changing of furniture, and arranging of dainty extras, had not been seen there in a long time.

When all was finally pronounced ready for the young stranger, Della declared it was the prettiest place in the house. "I am glad of it, though," she added, standing in the doorway and looking critically about. "As the time for Juvernia to come gets nearer, I begin to dread it. I do hope she won't put on airs and make us all feel uncomfortable."

"Even airy girls have hearts, dear; and if we act so as to win the love of the young Bal-

timore girl, I guess she will lay aside her airs, if she has any," Mrs. Kirtman responded brightly. "We are to treat her more like a favored visitor than a boarder, you know. As for me, I am expecting a really companionable little lady, and do not feel a bit afraid for her to come. I want you to run to the kitchen now and help Elina make the large cake-box full of doughnuts."

Della went merrily away, feeling the influence of the pleasant words. Her dark brown hair was plaited tightly at her neck and tied half way down with a black ribbon, while her plump, freckled face, beaming with good nature, made fit setting for her sparkling eyes. Running hither and thither waiting on Elina, she was a pleasant vision, and her mother, noticing her, thanked God for the buoyant health which filled this child with such cheerful animation.

The bustle of the next day or two was delightful, and even Terry tied on an apron and whisked in and out of the pantry and the kitchen — helping, he said.

Julian ran errands, or sat in a deep window seat playing little airs on his violin.

Then came the very day and the very hour of Juvernia's arrival, and Hugh put on his best suit and went to the station, calling out to Terry that he would bring him his bundle of choice Baltimore airs in a very short while. He had scarcely reached the platform at the depot when several boys hailed him, one of them saying:

"Ho, Hugh Kirtman! What puts you on dress parade?"

"Got to meet a girl from Baltimore, and I'm trembling away down in my shoes!" Hugh answered, laughing.

"The trembling is all down there then, for there's none of it in your voice," the boy commented, sauntering up. "Is it that boarder I heard you are to have? What's her name?"

"Oh, she has some heathenish name — Juvernia Vann, I believe. That's enough to frighten one! But then, she is younger than I, and I suppose she won't trouble me any."

"Don't flatter yourself, old fellow! She can trouble you if she wants to. She is going to find a large difference between her city and this town! I've been there, you know. And if she belongs to the high and mighty Vann family that I have heard of, you are in for a season of bliss!"

"Thank you for your words of comfort. They give me the trembles in my very heels!" Hugh said. "Guess I'd run if it weren't for the fact that Terry says if she goes to putting on airs around him he means to duck her in the blue hole."

Both boys shouted with laughter at the picture these words conjured up, though the sound of their mirth was drowned by the screech of the oncoming engine.

Hugh was certainly not over-gallant, for he stood right where he was, watching the few passengers for Overbrook alight. Last of all came a large, handsomely-dressed gentleman and an attractive young girl. Hugh's companion jogged his elbow in a transport of chuckles.

"There is style for you!" he exclaimed. "That's Miss Baltimore, old fellow! Don't her eyes shine as she talks to her father? Isn't she fair — and pretty? Hurry, Hugh! They are looking this way."

Half ashamed of his delay, Hugh did hurry, advancing with a smiling countenance to meet the strangers.

Taking several parcels from Juvernia, he received a bright smile and the words, "Thank you. I think boys are such comforts."

"So do I," said Mr. Vann, laughing. "Especially when they can take my trunk checks and let me see Juvernia directly to a carriage."

"I'm just the boy for you then," said Hugh, taking the checks and hurrying away.

CHAPTER IV.

FORETELLING THE HARVEST.

AFTER that, Hugh was astonished at the ease he felt in Juvernia's presence, and the two chatted and laughed so merrily that Roy Elliot envied Hugh the ride to the house. And the next day he received a glowing account of the stranger, for all the Kirtman family liked her.

As for Juvernia, she felt as if she were living in a new world, among the oddest people imaginable, and it was well that old Cynthy had been right when she said this young girl could adapt herself to any kind of people. It was also well that the stranger liked the new world, and that the odd people fascinated her.

At first, when the family gathered, night and morning, in the sitting-room, and Mrs. Kirtman conducted family prayers, Juvernia looked on with astonishment so plainly stamped upon her face that it was almost comical to behold her. Never before had she been of such a gathering, and that a lady could pray aloud was the most surprising bit of knowledge she had ever acquired. She recollected herself very quickly, however, and then felt uneasy lest the family had detected her amazement; which they had, though it did not affect them unpleasantly.

There was a long list of other surprises also. Juvernia soon noticed that no servants went about the house and yard keeping things in order and waiting on the family. Yet order was preserved in some magic way, and no one seemed suffering for attention. When she found out why this was so, she caught her aristocratic breath in dismay. That the family did every single thing that had to be done, was amazing in the extreme to Mrs. Vann's daughter.

"It doesn't hurt them that I can see," she said to herself. "They are nice people and seem to know a great deal. They associate with the very best families in the place — the Rayfolds, for instance. Della says he is the richest man in the county, and mother at least thinks that the richest people are the best associates."

It seemed to Juvernia that a church bell never rang that the Kirtmans did not go to some kind of service; and she often went with them, noting with wonder the great difference between their simple service and the formal one at her mother's church. She had never before been at a mid-week service, and the experience was as pleasing as novel. Soon her earnest face became a familiar one to Overbrook people, and she herself began to feel at home. Perhaps she did have somewhat of the spirit of her father's mother, for the good ways and doctrines she heard seemed all perfectly natural and right to her, and her heart began to grow as a beautiful flower grows in fresh air.

Her father would have been delighted at the degree of interest the people in general took in his daughter. Mrs. Kirtman understood it one morning when a girl who lived in a rude house a mile from the mill brought a great cluster of water-lilies to Juvernia. "I did not know you knew her," the lady said, receiving the flowers.

"Oh, yes. She comes by home walking with the boys and girls," answered the shy creature, "and she always smiles and nods at me. I heard her say she wanted some water lilies, and I got them for her."

"That was kind. When she is ready for breakfast she shall have them," said Mrs. Kirtman.

A blush suffused the girl's face, and she said, naïvely, "You see, ma'am, one can't help loving her. Her clothes are a heap finer than ours, but she don't seem to think of it. She belongs to the kind of folks that are proud and airy, but she's got no haughty ways about her, and just don't seem to know there's any difference in folks. She's

beautiful and has beautiful ways, but really, ma'am, I don't think she's ever known it. She pats my little brother's head with them soft white hands of hers the same as if he was a king's son. She is just as sweet as she can be!"

"I agree with you perfectly," said Elina's soft voice. "We all love her very much."

Even Terry entertained the opinions of the gatherer of lilies, and he felt very much teased one day when Ray Elliott asked him when he meant to introduce Miss Baltimore to the bottom of the blue hole.

Juvernia's first letters to her parents were so full of exclamation points that the two laughed aloud over them, though Mrs. Vann forgot the bristling pages in her surprise at the description of family prayers. "We might as well have boarded her with the doctor," she said stiffly.

A few weeks later, she said, "Mr. Vann, I do wish you would listen to the child's description of her new Sunday-school teacher, Miss Marion McAwtry. Irish name? Or is it Scotch? Juvernia is impressed with her ladyship's wisdom and goodness, whether she be Irish, Scotch or English. Dear me! I do hope they won't put a lot of foolish ideas into the child's head. When I get her back home, though, I'll see that she comes to order. She wants to know if she may sing at Sunday-school! Next she will be wanting to sing in hospitals. I would better stop it at once, I suppose, for I have no idea of letting Juvernia become a second Florence Nightingale, I assure you."

Her reference to Juvernia's singing touched upon a point very near the mother's heart. It had been discovered long before that the young girl possessed a voice that was strong and sweet to a marvelous degree, and a great musician had advised that she should not sing much until after she was sixteen. That is why permission to sing at Sunday-school was asked. A decided refusal was expected, so it did not surprise the waiting singer very much, though the many cautions which followed did.

Possibly some of my readers will remember that among those who went to see Mrs. Ripley when she visited Overbrook on her way home from California, was a little girl sent to represent her invalid mother. That little girl was Marion McAwtry, and she had grown to be the music teacher of the town, and much else. Her life was almost as shut-in as that of her frail mother, but every one seemed to know and to appreciate her.

Her father was "the character" of the town. In all his life he had never been known to finish any work undertaken. He was always working, and working hard, either poring over a book or writing one. Yet he never completed any of his writings. He would seize upon new ideas and begin a new book when the old one was probably not more than two-thirds finished. It was said he had never earned so much as a hundred dollars in his life. The family lived on a small income belonging to his wife, and on Marion's earnings, many wondering how the two meagre funds were made to suffice. Elina Kirtman said that Mr. McAwtry reminded her of the father of the Schönberg-Cotta Family, though his character was not so sweet.

Don McAwtry, the only son of this strange man, was Hugh Kirtman's age, but very unlike the studious, exquisitely neat Hugh. He was a moody fellow, very unpleasant at home, and often when away from home. He was disrespectful to his parents, and unmindful of the many ways in which he might have lightened Marion's burdens. People called him selfish and rude, and yet there were a few who doubted the existence of these qualities in him, for one reason: He was very fond of Julian Kirtman, and Julian was devoted to Don. It did not seem possible for darkness and light to love each other, and it was a common sight to see the tall boy and the small boy walking together

along some street, evidently enjoying each other's company.

If Marion failed to find help or comfort in Don, she certainly did not find either in her one sister, Julia. This girl was older than Don, was pretty, idle and friendly, all animation and carelessness. She seemed perfectly willing to take every pleasure that came in her way, not caring whether Marion ever had one or not, or whether necessary work was ever accomplished.

Seeing thus into the daily life of the McAwtrys, it is easy to understand what a hard life Marion led, and difficult to understand how she made a beautiful character blossom out of her unwholesome surroundings. Marion was fair, plump and pretty, with dark brown hair, and earnest blue eyes somewhat deep set under the brow. When in repose there was a decided sadness in her face, but when a smile darted its sunniness hither and yon over her features, people knew that, for the moment at least, there were song-birds and flowers in Marion's heart. It was not often, however, that those who were accustomed to seeing her thought of her face; they thought, rather, of her nature, the soul which seemed dwelling in her beautiful eyes, looking at one serenely, lovingly.

Dr. Chellway, Mrs. Vann's "rosy doctor," was superintendent of the Sunday-school which the Kirtman family attended, and of course Juvernia met him promptly. He did not understand the interest with which she watched him and listened to him, for he had forgotten that he had ever seen her parents. But he liked her from their first meeting, and put her in Marion's class as a mark of special interest in each, teacher and pupil.

There were some spirited talks between the teacher and Juvernia during several lesson periods, because ideas that were old and true to the rest of the class were so perfectly new and untried to the daughter of the fashionable Mrs. Vann. Juvernia showed so plainly that the ideas were astonishing, that she astonished the entire class, all being much interested in her lack of knowledge, and anxious for her to believe as they did. This stylish girl, in beautiful clothing, and whose pleasant ways delighted them, seemed to know next to nothing about things that were well-established truths to them. And her mind was so bright and fearless that she would ask the most amazing questions with a simple eagerness which showed her ignorance. "It is just this way, Miss Marion," she said one morning; "you all have been taught about these matters, and I have not. Some things you speak are as new to me as a fairy tale would be, for mother never would allow me to read that kind of a story."

She looked puzzled when Marion said at the close of the lesson one Sunday, "I want my girls to do me a favor this week. I want each one to write not less than five lines in which she shall give her individual idea of who Jesus is. Will you do it?"

"Yes, ma'am," came the ready answer from all except Juvernia, who said:

"I have never thought much about Jesus. I think my ideas of him are not worth writing."

"But that is not my reason for asking the favor. It is not to get ideas worth the writing, but to know just exactly what each one thinks of him."

"Then I will write," Juvernia said.

Each one of her classmates wanted to know Juvernia's ideas of Jesus, and she wanted to know theirs, so none of them missed the next session. But all were disappointed, for the teacher received the small white papers and put them in her Bible, saying, "I cannot read them now, but I will take them home with me, and next Sunday will tell you which one expresses what I believe to be nearest the truth. In fact, we will talk about the ideas which are especially true and those which are false."

Reading the papers made the brightest spot in all that week to Marion, and Juver-

nia's she read several times. "A splendid character is that girl!" she said musingly. "She will be a leader wherever she goes, and I fairly hunger to help make her the right kind of example. I know I will have God's help in trying to do so, and it encourages me to think that I am in league with such a Helper."

She looked at the paper in her hand as though she did not see it, but some other object, something that made her very happy. Juvernia's honestly-worded sentences could never have put that glow on the sad face. Here they are:

"Jesus was God's son. He came to earth thousands of years ago, and did a great many good deeds, all of which are recorded in a book called the Bible. He said he loved the people, and so he blessed them, even the little ones. The cruel among the people would not believe he was God's son, and they killed him. Of course he went to heaven, and he has never been back to the earth since then. I believe the Bible says he will come again some day.

"Juvernia N. Vann."

Mrs. McAwtry was such a confirmed invalid that she never left home and had few pleasures, and Marion knew how it would interest her to read the papers written by her pupils, especially Juvernia, so she carried them to her and gave her a sparkling description of the fair-haired girl who had made so many friends at Overbrook. She was astonished, when her mother finished reading the paper, to hear her say:

"I knew the girl's mother years ago, and I am not surprised that her daughter is so ignorant about Jesus. Do you notice that she does not use the present tense anywhere in her writing? How sad to think of Jesus as utterly absent from the world!"

"What kind of a woman was Mrs. Vann?" Marion asked.

"Too haughty to let us become acquainted with her. An iceberg in the tropics would not be more out of place than she was when she first came to Overbrook. The ladies treated her as cordially as they do all strangers, and she ignored them. I am afraid she held her head too high to bend her eyes on the Bible very often, and I am also afraid, dear, that she will not appreciate your efforts to instruct her child."

"But that ought not to make me unmindful of Juvernia, or hold me back from trying to help her, ought it? It shall not, mother. I mean to do all I can to help her to know God truly. I was just now planning to invite her here to tea, because it will give me a chance to become better acquainted with her, and so to more wisely help her."

"A fine scheme, I must say!" said a new voice, and Don's black head rose above the ledge of the open window. "I was passing and heard you, and I have a great mind to tell Juvernia Vann your kind intentions. You are a fine one! I'd hate to have any one scheme about me in such a fashion!"

The injustice, the unkindness, and the taunt in Don's voice did not fail to sting Marion, for she was but human, and her lips parted with a ready retort. But a sudden turning to Jesus saved the speaking of words that could have done no good, and the frown left her face. This was indeed proof that Marion was in league with One very powerful, in league to do more than one work. She looked at Don, and said quietly:

"You didn't hear enough to understand, Don. You know she is in my Sunday-school class, and I was planning to give her a pleasure, and at the same time gain a truer knowledge of her so as to know better how to teach her."

"It didn't sound that way to me," said the surly boy. "You said she has false ideas. So have you, and one of them is that you think yourself fit to be a Sunday-school teacher."

He disappeared as his mother's reproof was spoken, and, though Marion looked pained, she said:

"Never mind, mother. Don does not mean all he says, and I must never give him

cause to say a more unkind thing than he said then."

In those days, no one ever knew what to expect of Don McAwtry. He seemed swayed by every passing circumstance, being gay or petulant, kind or unkind, talkative or sullenly silent. There was a cause, of course, and the reader may smile to hear that it was trouble which made him so unpleasant. He felt that he was wronged, that he was an outcast with a home, and that every one's hand was against him without cause. He was not wise enough to know that the spirit in which we accept circumstances over which we have no control, makes our lot either better or worse.

Boys are often peculiarly sensitive about the treatment they receive from their fathers. Don felt that his father was cruel to him, but he took care to keep the feeling to himself. He was very fond of music, and his father said that a man who is a musician is fit for nothing, not even to be a musician. He forbade Don's touching the piano at any time anywhere. Then the boy bought a very fine harmonica, or French mouth-harp, and from it brought melodies so lively and bright, or so weird and tender or sad, as to hold the listener spellbound. Mr. McAwtry heard him once, and sternly prohibited his ever playing on the little instrument anywhere about the premises. So Don, feeling outraged, nursed his anger sullenly, and, whenever he longed to make music, would leave home. Wandering off, either to stand on one of the numerous bridges or to walk without any destination in view, his long fingers would touch his harp lovingly while it told the fancies of his mind.

His mother sympathized with the boy, saying that music was to him what writing was to his father, and that his talent ought to be cultivated. Marion felt keenly for him, but he would not allow a word of pity from anyone. Often, far into the night, she heard his unmistakable music floating homeward as he trudged along the lonely streets, and it was then she felt that he could not be thoroughly bad, with so much melody in his soul. How to reach that soul and win it to its best, became an absorbing thought of Marion's.

It was the fault of neither Terry, Della nor Julian if Juvernia failed to thoroughly explore Overbrook, and all the near vicinity, during the first few weeks of her stay there. They seemed to have dedicated their vacation to her entertainment, and their mother became an adept at putting up compact lunches. There was a new excursion for almost every day, and when the distance was great, Hugh and Elina invited some of their friends and joined the party. Walking was a pleasant pastime to the young people at Overbrook, and as there were very few bicycles in the place, Juvernia used hers but seldom. She reveled in outdoor exercise, and the longer the walk the better she liked it. She declared that if she could she "would spend every summer in the country," — the only thing she ever said which hurt Julian's feelings. But after listening to many a graphic description of Baltimore, its magnificent buildings, electric lights and trolley cars, the monument, Druid Hill Park, the bay and steamships, he became convinced in his secret heart that Juvernia might be forgiven for calling his town "in the country."

Things did not happen as Marion had planned they should with regard to her new pupil, and Don repented him of his threats. Mrs. McAwtry had one of her severe attacks of sickness, and almost two full weeks passed before Marion could think of outside affairs. "It does not matter, though," she told herself. "I believe God will direct me in choosing a better time than the one I first selected. He does help us when we want him to; and I know I do."

But we will now leave quiet Overbrook, and make a short visit to a far-away cattle-ranch in Colorado.

CHAPTER V.

ON A CATTLE RANCH.

ALL the long July day prairie breezes had fanned the brown face of a boy whose pony bore him racing here and there. The vigor of perfect health, of youth, made life a charm to him. But at twilight, when all things were in order for the night, he was very ready to rest. A trifle wearily he entered the only house in a circle of many miles. It was home to him. Throwing himself on the floor of one of its two rooms, he said to himself that he would rest until Bernardo came in, and then he would go and speak to "father."

Pillowing his head on his arm, he was almost instantly fast asleep. Nor did he dream of the total change on the very threshold of which the night would place him. Had he known the near future, his weariness would have been as naught, and he would have been standing on the log step peering eastward, wondering about the very little town where Juvernia Vann that night pillowed her fair head. Then, doubtless, he would have glanced regretfully about him, sighing because he must give up the free life he loved. But a wise Power ruled that he should know only the present, and he slept on. Finally footsteps broke the stillness, and a Spaniard entered the house, looked with a certain softening of his black eyes at the boy, and then passed into the other room.

The man's name was Bernardo Barez, and he held the dual position of overseer and chief friend to the owner of the ranch, then very sick. As he entered Mr. Anthon's room he was greeted by an eager but feeble voice, and then came the question, "How is the boy, and where? Surely he is not asleep already?"

"Yes, sound asleep, his head on his arm," the Spaniard answered, laughing in a way that seemed to imply that even the sleeping of this particular boy was a notable affair to him and to the questioner.

"No doubt he is tired out; let him sleep. But throw a blanket over him, Bernardo; it is so chilly," said the sick man. "Then, old friend, come and sit where I can see you, please. I can imagine how tired you are, and hungry, too. Yet there are things I must tell you to-night, and I feel so weak I dare not wait another hour."

"I don't mind waiting two hours, if it will be the least help to you," Bernardo said, taking a seat at the side and near the foot of the bed. He looked closely at the face on the pillow as he sat down, and there was a pathetic intentness in the gaze. Mr. Anthon understood it perfectly. Long days and weeks and months and years spent with Bernardo had made the two pretty well acquainted with each other.

"I know that all I have to say will be hard on you, old friend," commenced the sick man, "but time is about up with me, and I must speak. I do not understand why I should die while my life seems of such importance to two people, anyway. But I do know that God can care for you both without my help, and that if I go away, he will still seek to make everything work for good. And I want you to do me a favor, Bernardo. I know it is one of many, old comrade, — for comrade you have surely been through the years we have spent together."

"All the pleasure I have is in being able to do things for you," the Spaniard answered, a suggestion of reproach in his voice. "You could ask nothing of me that I would not do gladly."

Mr. Anthon felt that the words were true, and as he looked at his friend a great compassion seemed to rush out from his heart to embrace the one who would so sorely miss him. For several moments he said nothing, and then he evidently made an effort to speak brightly.

"What I want," he said, "is your promise

to stand by Max. There is not a man I would sooner trust, or trust further, than you. The boy is unfortunate; if you should fail him, it will indeed be hard on him."

The Spaniard scarcely heard a word other than those in the first sentence, the want which Mr. Anthon expressed. He sat perfectly still, seeming to weigh his answer, which somewhat surprised his companion. But in reality, Bernardo was not thinking of his answer. He was taking a deliberate survey of the past — his past; a hard, cruel waste, cheerless as miles of Sahara sands, until Mr. Anthon found him. The mere remembrance of what this man had done for him always broke up the deeps in the Spaniard's heart, making his keen black eyes lose their hard glitter. He knew that the boy Max was almost as dear as life itself to Mr. Anthon, and, looking up, he now made answer:

"If you go away, my life shall stand between the boy and all things that can hurt. I will stay by him, in sight, until he, too, is gone, or until I go. It is my word."

He made a sweeping gesture as he finished speaking, bringing his hand down on the table beside him as a closing emphasis.

"That is good; that fills me with content," said the sick man, in almost cheery tones. "And now, old friend, light a candle, please. I dare not wait until to-morrow to tell you certain things I would have you know. Lying here alone through the long days, I have thought it all out."

As the candle's rays lighted the room, Mr. Anthon continued:

"If you will run your hand under my pillow, Bernardo, you will find my keys. Open my trunk and bring me the box you will see at the bottom, under my best clothes — a large box."

Bernardo did these services very deftly, for his hands had learned long before to be gentle and swift in ministering to the man with whom and for whom he delighted to labor. He looked wonderingly at the beautiful ebony box, with its broad brass bands and two small brass padlocks. He had never seen it before.

Putting the box on the side of the bed, Mr. Anthon placed one of his thin hands on it, saying:

"Sit down, now, and hear me. I have never told you my early history, but it is not because I was afraid to trust you. I left home, Bernardo, when a young man, and I have reason to think that my home people believe I am dead. This year I made up my mind I would sell the ranch and take you and Max to my own State, to live there. That will never be for me now. We can never count on any future time, old friend; that's a point for you to remember. I was not the only one in the wrong when I left home, though I was terribly in the wrong, and did want to say so to my people. As it is, I shall let matters rest. In this box are articles that closely concern Max, and yet I prefer that he remain in ignorance of it until he is of age. I now put the box in your keeping. And, Bernardo, when I am gone, all I have will be yours. I know of no better place for you to keep the box than in my trunk. Max need never know of its existence until you give it to him."

"But if I should die before the boy is twenty-one; what then?"

"In that case I want you to give the box to a friend I have in a town called Overbrook. He is Dr. Jack Chellway, and he, too, probably thinks I am dead. If the time comes that you need to know, look on the last page of a brown memorandum book in the tray of my trunk, and you will find Jack's address. You will also find there the address of my lawyer at Denver. When all is over here, go to him and he will give you two thousand dollars. He knows you by sight, and he will understand what you are there for when you tell him I am dead — not the money alone; there are other things he will have to attend to then. He was here only yesterday, while you were away. The

money is for you, old comrade, and not for Max. You will find enough in my trunk to pay all necessary expenses for some time to come, and the lawyer will manage Max's money. I have instructed him to send it to Chellway, who is the boy's guardian."

During all these remarks, the Spaniard had been watching Mr. Anthon's face. He stopped the words with a gesture.

"I must be clear," he said. "You mean for me to take the boy to Overbrook and give him up to that man, the doctor?"

"Yes, give him to Jack. Not because I love him better than I love you, old friend, but because he is one of my own people and will know better than you what kind of education and training is best for Max. You see how that is, don't you?"

"Yes; oh, yes," the Spaniard answered, not a dissenting note in his voice. "I know little of the customs of your people. The boy will fare best among his own. You do well, in everything. I shall give him up, but I shall not leave him. I shall stay close by, guard him and his box, and keep him in mind of you."

In his voice there was not a sound of anything but love; the one intense human love which, so far, was the only love the Spaniard had ever felt except his affection for Max.

Looking at him, Mr. Anthon felt a sudden throb of deep emotion. It was no small matter of which the Spaniard spoke so calmly—the devoting of his entire future to watching over his benefactor's son, keeping him "in mind" of his father. There was a thrill of his emotion in his voice when the sick man spoke.

"Bernardo," he said, "your heart is as steadfast as Pike's Peak, old fellow. Somehow I get as weak as a tearful woman when I remember that you will be lonesome when I am gone. How I wish you knew more of God! My end would then be peace, for I would know that you could be comforted by a Friend who would never leave you—never. You are left with him, Bernardo, even though you do not know him. If you knew God so as to love him, my leaving you would not be what it is. You would have that which would rest you."

The man looked away from the face of his sick comrade. "It sounds good and peaceful," he said. "But you remember I was brought up by people who did not teach your Bible. I suppose there were good ones among my people, but them I knew not. The cruel I knew."

"There are evil people in all nations, Bernardo. You were unfortunate. I wish you would promise to read the Bible. As I have many times said, I am sure it will lead you to good alone. Take my word for it, old comrade, and read the Bible which I shall leave behind me. I beg you to try and forget the cruel teachings you have heard. But my pain is great; I can talk no more. Only hear this: When I am gone, let no one but you and Max care for my body. Bury it under the two trees where we buried Neal. The boy may stand by the heap and read the last chapter in the Bible, and say a prayer aloud. His lips are pure, and I believe his heart is; so his prayers will suffice at my grave. Ah, I wish I had spent my life differently; had known God sooner! There are other things I want you to know, but if I never tell you, forgive me when you find them out. I suffer!"

The Spaniard rose quickly and brought a tin dipper of water, raising the sick man's head that he might drink with more ease. Then he said, "There will never come a time when I shall need to forgive you aught. Rest. Perhaps you will get better."

He left the room, hearing Max astir; and, sending him to sit with his father, he himself began to prepare the evening meal.

The Spaniard had put the box in its accustomed place before leaving Mr. Anthon's room, and as he worked he thought of it, and of all he had heard. He felt that but a few more days at longest remained for his one friend, and he paused a moment in his effort to recall exactly what Mr. Anthon had said about the Friend from whom one need never be separated. That was an idea which appealed to Bernardo Barez; his past made the friendliness of anyone sweet to him. And death comes to all friends. If he could feel the presence with him of the One whom Mr. Anthon so loved and rejoiced in, and knew that even death could not separate him from that One, it would be good indeed.

One of the faithful who are in league with the Powerful had done his part; and the future shall reveal the result.

During the next few days Bernardo spent most of the time with Mr. Anthon, watchful that there was no lack of comfort which he could procure for the sick man. Few words passed between them, one being too feeble, the other too sorrowful. But Bernardo had many thoughts, and he so far conquered the force of lifelong training that when the end really came he bent his head low and said:

"For your sake, I myself will read the chapter you mentioned. All shall be as you would have it."

Having said these words, the sorrow within him was lulled at sight of the smile which lit up Mr. Anthon's face, a smile direct from the departing soul. It was still resting on the calm features when Bernardo and Max shut the face from mortal sight.

Mr. Anthon's grave was made in one of the most lonesome spots in Colorado, and when all was ready, Max stood by and listened to Bernardo as he read words the boy had heard many times before, the man never. Bernardo's hands shook as he held the worn Bible, and no power but love could have made him read in the book. When the reading was over, Max, having been told by his father what was expected of him, folded his arms, bowed his bared head, and repeated his daily prayer. The young voice trembled over the words, because of the tears which no effort of will could keep from rolling down his cheeks.

The little figure had such an air of dreary loneliness about it, and the shaking voice and fast-rolling tears were so heart-breaking to the Spaniard, that he lost all control of

himself, and for the first time in his life folded to his heart a human form and gave to a child the comfort which caresses are able to give.

"Cry on if you want to, Max," he said, swallowing a sob which was in his own throat. "Every one cries some time or another. But don't you forget that old Bernardo won't leave you as long as he lives. Your father was good to me, and I am going to spend the rest of my days for his little boy."

Max clung to the Spaniard and gave full vent to the storm of sorrow he had kept pent up in his heart as long as he could. And Bernardo comforted him. They lingered about the place until the sun went down, and then turned their faces to the place they called home.

Mr. Anthon had been so careful in making his arrangements that but little remained for Bernardo to do. The ranch had been sold some time before, and its new owner was only waiting for the Spaniard and Max to move out, a work requiring short time to accomplish, as nothing except two trunks was to be carried away.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SPANIARD AT OVERBROOK.

MAX seemed to enjoy his stay at Denver, and Bernardo remained several days longer than necessary, hoping to give him time to recover somewhat from his grief before going among strangers and to new ways of living. Bernardo himself dreaded the first days at Overbrook, and shuddered at the thought of spending his future among the strange people he was soon to meet. But at last the two were well on their journey, and the man enjoyed the strange sights everywhere to be seen as much as the boy did. Mexico was indeed a different country from this, he told himself.

The travel was long continued, and when they neared Overbrook they were thoroughly tired. Bernardo seemed to settle into the shell of reserve which he had always worn until the memorable time when he had snatched Max close to his heart that day by Mr. Anthon's grave. He was all in readiness when the train stopped, and he and Max were soon standing on the ground, looking questioningly about them. But, if they felt interested in their surroundings, no less did their beholders feel interested in them, and they had far more of observation than they desired.

It was late in the afternoon, and Bernardo went to a hotel, saying that he would rest before calling on Max's guardian, who was not even expecting him. He felt almost angry at the curious glances every one bent upon him and his charge, and at the hotel he talked as little as possible. He shut himself in his room after supper, and answered as best he could the numerous questions Max asked him, for the boy was feverishly excited now that he was actually in the town where his guardian lived.

With a patience born of love, Bernardo talked until Max went to bed. There the boy tried various positions with and without pillows, and it was some time before the Spaniard felt assured that he was asleep. Then he unlocked the trunk which had once been Mr. Anthon's, and, taking a letter from it, left the room, closing the door softly. In the office he caused a new ripple of comment by asking for a porter to show him the way to Dr. Jack Chellway's home.

He and his guide were scarcely on the street before the clerk said:

"I'd stake all I have that the man is a Spaniard. He wouldn't register, or his name would tell his nationality. But the boy with him hasn't a drop of Spanish blood in his veins. Wonder what the man is up to? He talks English about as well as we do."

"Oh, that's nothing!" said a lounger. "Guess he's been out West in our country for years; most of his life, perhaps. I've seen them out West myself. But, Spaniard or not, he hasn't rubbed his eyeballs with diamond dust for nothing. They shine like cold steel, and bore into a fellow like gimlets could. I mean to be polite to him, and to keep my hands off that boy he seems to worship."

A low laugh ran around the group at these words, and then some one else took up the subject.

Bernardo dismissed his guide in front of Dr. Chellway's door, though the guide would fain have witnessed the meeting between the doctor and his visitor.

Dr. Chellway and his wife — called "Mis' Dolly" by the loving people her husband served — sat in the cheerful sitting-room reading. The doctor was beginning to nod over his paper when the bell startled him.

"I am going, Dolly," he said as his wife made a motion to rise. "I guess it is some one to call me to a patient."

Expecting to see a familiar face, the doctor swung open the door, and then uttered an exclamation of surprise. He regained his self-possession immediately, however, and his cordiality half won Bernardo.

"Good-evening, friend," he said. "Chellway is my name. What can I do for you?"

"I come to you from a friend, and have messages and letters for you," Bernardo said, in his confusion forgetting to announce his own name.

"Then come right in," the doctor said. "You are welcome."

He closed the front door and led the way down the hall, and to his office.

As soon as they were seated, Bernardo said: "I reached your town this afternoon, coming from a cattle-ranch in Colorado. I bring you a letter from a lawyer, and one from Mr. Anthon. I have also brought Mr. Anthon's son to put in your care. He — Mr. Anthon, sir, — is dead."

As he finished speaking, he took from a note-book two letters and handed them to the doctor, who received them mechanically.

"Anthon?" he questioned, his eyes looking straight at the Spaniard. "Anthon? Anthon?"

A dark expression passed over the loyal Bernardo's face.

"Yes, I said Anthon," he responded. "You knew him never if you have forgotten him." He glanced at the letters as if he would take them back.

Dr. Chellway recognized the disapproval implied in word and manner, and bethought him of the fact that the letters would doubtless throw light on the identity of the gentleman mentioned. He hurriedly opened that of the lawyer, and his ejaculation of amazement was unmistakable. Moving nearer the lamp, he asked permission to open the other letter, and as he read it he showed plainly that its contents affected him deeply. His face deepened in color, and he several times drew his hand across his eyes. Bernardo felt better.

At last the reading was over, and the doctor refolded the pages, saying, "Poor Tom! Poor, poor fellow! But then, he was a different man when he died. I am glad of that!"

"You remember him now?" Bernardo asked.

"Yes, I remember him now," the doctor said. "Somehow, your 'Mr. Anthon' did not bring to mind the boy Tom with whom I passed most of my college days. He says in his letter that no other man deserves his love as you do. I loved him, and I thank you for having been good to him."

"But you mistake, sir. I was not good to him. Even a dog will stay by the one who binds up his wounds, watches over him when helpless, and protects from enemies. From the first, he was all I had. And the boy comes next, for his father's sake."

"A grateful man is a blessed sight!" Dr.

Chellway said, smiling. "But where is the boy?"

"Max is asleep at the hotel," Bernardo answered. "He comes to you to-morrow morning. But, if you would be so good, I would like to keep him with me until I get settled."

As he spoke, he looked up at the doctor and then away, timidly, as if shrinking from expected refusal. But he did not know the big, loving heart of the homely man who listened to him, and who seemed to read his inner feelings. He felt freed from a heavy weight when the doctor said:

"Of course; keep him with you until you both become acquainted with our people and feel at home. It is decidedly best for the boy, and I am sure Tom would like for you to keep Max until he becomes acquainted with me and my wife. So you mean to settle here?"

"Where else should I stay?" asked Bernardo, with an upward gesture of his ever-ready right hand, denoting disquietude. "I told you the boy is all I now have. I stay near him."

"Yes — yes. I allowed it to slip my mind for the moment," the doctor hastened to say. "I am glad you will be here, and I want you to feel that Max is as much yours as he ever has been."

His voice was as kind as his words, and the Spaniard surveyed him calmly, as if coming to a decision concerning him. He did not speak, and, the silence being awkward, the doctor asked several questions about his old college friend, all of which Bernardo answered at length, anything respecting Mr. Anthon seeming to loosen his tongue at once.

It was eleven o'clock when he rose to go back to the hotel. He promised to bring Max at nine the next morning to make a short visit, and then departed, leaving the doctor to go to his wife with the astounding news.

Perhaps no family at Overbrook was so much beloved as the Chellway family. The doctor was known far and near, and was looked upon as the best friend the poor had, while his wife was little less. In social life and in the church they took a high stand, and the young people felt that they had a special claim on the childless couple.

Mrs. Chellway received the news of the coming of the young stranger from Colorado with the liveliest interest. She and her husband loved young people, and Max was an extremely fortunate boy, even though he did not think so.

When Bernardo regained his room at the hotel, he locked the door and then stood by Max's bed, looking down at the sleeper earnestly. His thoughts, however, were not of the boy, and after several minutes he turned away and began walking up and down the floor, much disturbed. Finally he stood still, struck his forehead with his open palm, and exclaimed:

"I am done with it! I am done with the life I led before he found me! What good ever came to me in it? It is not that I do not love my land — though I hate some of her people. It is that I seek the truth. He said the Bible is meant as much for me as for another. I will believe his word. Did he ever lie to me? No. Did he not do me more good than all among my people who said not to read the Bible? I shall read it. I shall know for myself. I shall find out about that 'whosoever' word, and the words 'no more curse.'"

The glitter in the Spaniard's eyes showed his excitement, as did his eagerness in unlocking his trunk and taking therefrom the Book which had been a sealed volume to him all his life. Seating himself at the table, unmindful of the hour, he read again the chapter he had read at Mr. Anthon's grave. But not that alone. Remembering that his benefactor had generally read in the last half of the volume, he found Matthew and read chapter after chapter; read as though each sentence grappled itself to his

very heart. What time it was he did not know, but suddenly darkness hid the page from him. The small bed-room lamp had burned out its oil. He sighed with intense feeling as he closed the Book, deciding to read it through as soon as he could.

"He knew sorrow, and I know sorrow," Bernardo said as he prepared for rest in the darkness. "He knew wrong and persecution, the man Jesus, and I know both. His heart felt only kindness, but mine is not so. I have found none who came to him that he did not help. Had I been there, he would have felt for me, too. I wish he lived now. Mr. Anthon said he is living and was with him. But that I do not know. I shall see if the doctor can tell me about this. I shall ask him to make me know all. Now I see not clearly."

The next morning Max was dressed long before Bernardo awoke. He sat quietly at a window and watched the strangers go by, wondering which he would learn to know best, and if any one of these passers could be his guardian.

He and Bernardo ate breakfast alone, and pretty soon thereafter set out for Dr. Chellway's. Both dreaded the visit; they felt so set apart in this land of strangers, and ways to which they were unaccustomed. The Spaniard pined for the friend he had buried in Colorado, and Max felt sore and troubled when he thought of his father and the free life on the prairies. He wanted his pony and a long dash over treeless plains, then a night in the house of two rooms.

After the dreaded visit had been made, though, he thought to himself that he need not have been so unhappy about it, for it proved to be a genuine delight.

"I will remember this the next time I dread a thing, Bernardo," he said, laughing. "I will take off three-fourths of the dread as very likely to be unnecessary; and, you see, that will help me a great deal."

There was perfect understanding in Bernardo's eyes. "So is it," he said. "That is a plan sensible — fine. It is like your father to get good out of things. You know he said that good would come even from his death."

"Yes, I know," Max assented.

That morning, as Bernardo and Max approached Dr. Chellway's house, the front door opened and the doctor and his wife came forth cordially, meeting the strangers almost at the street, and giving pleasant smiles and words in plenty. Even the solemn face of the Spaniard lighted up when the tall, pretty lady shook hands with him and called him Mr. Bernardo. He liked that better than "Mr. Barez," for his surname had been used so seldom in his life that the sound of it startled him. He looked on apprehensively as the lady turned to greet Max, but when she spoke his whole bearing changed.

"So this is to be my own little son?" she said, graciously. "Why, all the other mothers will be wanting my Colorado boy, I'm afraid."

She stepped aside to give place to the doctor, and Max found his way into his heart at once by saying:

"My father, sir, told me to give you word that he had never ceased to love you, and he said that I also am to love you."

The dutiful little speech, sounding so unlike a boy's unguided expression, was charming to those who heard it, and after that restraint was impossible.

The guests were conducted into the pretty sitting-room, and both quickly felt that they were no longer strangers. Bernardo fairly beamed when he realized that Max had not been so cheerful since his father's death, and he gave his liking to the people who had won such behavior from the boy. The rest of the visit was an unmixed pleasure, and the guests dreaded to leave the house almost as much as they had dreaded to enter it.

Bernardo's keen eyes had discovered two well-used Bibles on a little stand in the hall,

and he at once decided that he could get the doctor to explain all he failed to understand in his readings. He said nothing about it at that time, however.

In a small town it requires but a short while for any item of real news to spread, and when Bernardo and Max seated themselves at the hotel table for dinner, every other person there had heard their recent history, with bold additions.

CHAPTER VII.

JUVERNIA'S BRIGHTEST DAY.

TO the boys at Overbrook, Max was a genuine, flesh-and-blood, visible hero, and before they had ever spoken to him they gave him credit for knowing more about cattle than any native of Overbrook knew, and for being a better horseman than any trained rider in their part of the country.

Had it not been for the stern-looking Bernardo, Max would have been besieged with visitors on his very first afternoon at the hotel. As it was, the parrot had a great deal of company on the long front porch, and Max remained quietly in the room with Bernardo, until both were ready to come forth. Ray, Don and Hugh tired of waiting, and went their way. But Terry and a number of his friends held their ground, and added several new words to the bird's vocabulary while waiting.

Patience generally secures its object, and at last Bernardo and the wonderful boy appeared and stood irresolutely on the porch as if wondering what to do. As they stood there, a girl on a bicycle sped by, and the strangers looked after her with interest. Her dark blue dress, and deep collar and cuffs of white, her daintily-booted feet, and the long blonde hair floating from under a white cap, made her appear a vision of beauty. She had glanced up as she passed, smiling at Terry, and a wistful look shot into Bernardo's eyes, as if he were pained. When Bernardo and Max were on the street, the boy asked the Spaniard why he had looked vexed when the girl on the wheel passed.

"Not vexed," he answered shortly, the same look coming into his eyes. "Did you not notice how like she is to Mr. Anthon? The same face, kind, fair, and the same air about her."

"I did not think of father, but I did think I had seen her before," Max answered.

The girl was Juvernia, and the sight of her so filled Bernardo with thoughts of his dead friend that the walk he was taking was a very quiet one.

When Juvernia passed the hotel she was on her way to see Marion. It was during Mrs. McAwtry's illness, and Juvernia went every day to inquire after the lady, partly through love for Marion, and partly because Mrs. Kirtman seemed pleased to have her go. In these little visits, daily though short, Marion found opportunity for studying the character of the girl who thought that Jesus had never been back to the earth since his disappearance in the body. And on the afternoon when Max first saw her, Juvernia surprised her teacher into a discussion of the paper folded away still in her Bible, though Marion had meant to say nothing about it until she met with her class as usual.

Reaching the McAwtry home, Juvernia leaned her wheel against an elm and went in. Marion called her to come to a side porch where she was sewing, and Juvernia sat down on a step near her. Mrs. McAwtry was asleep, so the two chatted together on the porch, about them the beautiful light of a day when the sun is almost gone. They talked awhile of the Spaniard and the ranch boy, and, when that theme was exhausted, Juvernia said, shyly:

"Miss Marion, I wish you would tell me what you thought of my paper."

Marion felt a sudden bound of her heart

and a disinclination and yet a longing to talk with the girl about the contents of her paper. But the direct plea, accompanied by the earnest gaze of Juvernia's expressive eyes, could not be disregarded, and she put down her sewing.

"Come here," she said, coaxingly, impelled by a desire to be closer to the young girl.

Another moment and Juvernia was sitting close beside her, looking into her eyes. Taking one of the small white hands lovingly in her own, Marion said:

"Your paper made me long to tell you more of Jesus, Juvernia. It made me see so clearly that you do not know about him as I want you to. You see, if you learn of him as he is, you will be far happier than you can possibly be while not knowing. For one thing, you misunderstood, when you wrote that Jesus has never been back to the earth since he was here in bodily form, long years ago."

"Why, he hasn't, has he?"

"Yes, he has been here all the time since, is here now; but in a spiritual form, which is far better for us than if in a body. Don't you see that if he were in a bodily form, but few of us at a time could be near him, could talk with him, could feel his personal love? — his love towards any one of us, I mean."

"I can understand that. But, Miss Marion, how do you know he is here, if you never see him?"

"He is in the hearts of people, encouraging to good deeds. We see him in his influence on people, and we feel his influence in ourselves."

"Then I suppose we may tell in whose heart he lives by the way that person acts," Juvernia said. "Do you think that is one way to be sure of his presence?"

"Indeed it is one way," was answered. "But I am sorry it is not oftener that people show his presence in their hearts in that way. We often fail to do it. I love him so much, Juvernia, that I wish people might see him in all my ways. You understand, dear?"

"Yes, I think I do. A lady told me once that she could see my father in things I said and did. Is it like that?"

Marion smiled. "I am sure you are beginning to understand, and that you will know more and more perfectly. Have you read the history of his life on earth before he was crucified, in the little book I gave you not long ago?"

"I read it and enjoyed it. He was always doing good to people, wasn't he? and teaching them to do good. He certainly loved those old-time people, Miss Marion; do you think he loves people now as much?"

"I believes he loves us just as much, Juvernia, and is just as anxious to have us know it, and to help us and make us helpful to others. He loves you, Juvernia; and, loving you, wants you to know it and to love him."

"Why should he love me?" Juvernia asked wonderingly. "I have never known about him until now, and I do not love him."

"You make me think of one of the sweetest things about his love, Juvernia," Marion said, looking thoughtfully at the earnest young face upturned to hers. "He does not wait for us to love him first, but he gives us freely his own great love, always wanting ours."

"Are you sure, Miss Marion? I wish you would tell me how you know it. Do you really think he loves me right now?"

"Yes, I am sure he loves you now. I know it, because in the Bible he asks for our hearts. And why should he want our love if he does not love us? Then, there is the verse you learned about 'God so loved.'"

"Yes, I remember. But I never thought of it as meaning me. To think that he has wanted me to love him all this time, and I never knew it! It seems so strange! But he shall not continue to want my love and not have it. Oh, Miss Marion, do you think

he knows I am sorry that I did not know about him sooner?"

"I am sure he understands that, and every other thought of your heart, Juvernia," was the earnest answer.

"But how could I tell him? I would like to do that. If he knows my thoughts, though, he knows it already, doesn't he?"

"Yes, but I am sure he would like to have you think directly to him — as you speak directly to me, for instance. When you say your prayers, could you not tell him about it then?"

A deep crimson suffused Juvernia's face. "My prayers have never been so — so close to him, you know," she said. "To talk so to him would help me to feel his real presence with me, wouldn't it? I think I would like to do it."

She looked away to where a bird was flying across the space between two elms, while Marion also seemed thinking. Then Juvernia said, earnestly:

"Miss Marion, I do wish every one knew about him. I am sure they do not. I am afraid my father and mother do not know, or they would have told me. Do you think it would do for me to tell them about this?"

"You dear girl!" Marion exclaimed impulsively, "you are changed already, for even now you want to tell others that his love is for them, too, and lead them to love him."

They talked on and on, until Mrs. McAwtry's bell called Marion away. Then Juvernia said good-by, and there was a new tenderness in their parting. The girl's eyes had a beautiful, glad light in them as she sped home on her wheel, again passing Max and Bernardo.

That night she did not just "say her prayers," but talked to God, telling him freely her simple thoughts about herself and those she loved, and about him. It gave her a new, restful feeling, and she fell asleep with a glad peace in her heart.

It would have given Marion great happiness that night if she could have known how Juvernia had yielded to her teachings, and how the teachings and the yielding were to bless the young life, bearing fruit that would bless many. But we often sow both good and evil seed without ever seeing the whole harvest which is gathered.

CHAPTER VIII.

BERNARDO'S PLANS.

BERNARDO'S past had made him suspicious. Mr. Anthon was probably the only man who had ever treated him as an equal, until his lot was cast among the people at Overbrook. There the men all met him with a friendly cordiality, welcoming him as they would have welcomed any other man of his appearance and seeming claim upon the friendship of Dr. Chellway. While they were talking with him, he would fasten the wondering gaze of his mournful eyes upon them as if deliberating as to whether or not they were in earnest. His reserve was almost rude, and many decided at once that he preferred to be left alone.

He and Max took a long walk before breakfast the second morning of their stay in Overbrook. From the dining-room they went to their own room, and would probably have stayed there all morning if a porter had not summoned them to see Dr. and Mrs. Chellway. These friends had called to take the strangers for a drive about the town.

When the messenger turned from the door, Bernardo looked at Max appealingly. That these people proposed to take him, the Spaniard, on a pleasure drive, was simply not to be believed. "Suppose you go on; they wait," he said.

Max understood, as if by intuition, the Spaniard's feeling. This was because he knew somewhat of Bernardo's past. Yet

the past was past; Max loved him, and had been trained to think of him as worthy of all respect. Why should he not be as much a gentleman as even Dr. Chellway? After his unhappy life in Mexico Bernardo had been a ranchman; true, but so had his father been a ranchman — and Max straightened up at the thought that any one would have treated his father with disrespect on that account! So he looked straight at the Spaniard and said, in his most persuasive tone:

"The porter said you, too, Bernardo — you first. If you won't go, I am sure I don't want to; but with you along, it will be fine."

That Max so greatly desired him to go was an incentive to the man. He was living for Max, he told himself. So he arose immediately, saying:

"Come; I will go down with you and see if there is a mistake. If not, we will go."

Dr. and Mrs. Chellway sat on the front seat of a rockaway, and the doctor called out:

"Step right in, both of you. I want to show you what a fine spot of earth our town covers. You won't sigh for the plains, Mr. Barez, after you have once seen our valley and hills."

After these words there could be no mistake about the drive, and Bernardo stepped to his place, Max springing in after him, proud that the gentlemen treated Bernardo so well. As for the Spaniard, he began to feel that he would be the man the people seemed to take it for granted he had always been, and a free feeling entered his heart. He had indeed left that dark corner of Mexico and his ignorant oppressors; had left the lonely ranch; was among a nation of liberty-lovers; was free! He sighed as the horses started briskly off, but the sigh was for his past, was for the much-abused Bernardo; henceforth he would be the respected Mr. Barez.

He learned more of the town and its vicinity in that one drive than he would have learned in days by simply walking over it. Dr. Chellway noticed that he brightened considerably when several vine-covered hillsides were pointed out.

"Do you understand vine culture?" he asked.

"I understand it well," Bernardo answered. "I have been wanting to know if there is any chance of making a success of a vineyard here."

"A fine chance; you could make money at it," the doctor responded. "And here is for sale cheap as fine a place as you need want to begin on."

He pointed his whip to a long, bare hill and a narrow level between it and the road. There was a clump of trees at one end of the place and under them a spring. The house was much out of repair and was small, having but two rooms. But Bernardo would not need more, and he looked delightedly about as the horses stopped. He saw possibilities which, fortunately for him, the real owner of the place had never imagined.

"I am sure you could buy it for very little money," Dr. Chellway said. "I know the owner — Barman is his name — and I will be glad to introduce you to him."

"I would like to talk with Mr. Barman."

"Very well; nothing simpler," said the doctor. "And it is my opinion that you will be wise to buy. It is a fine place for a large vineyard."

The Spaniard's dark eyes were shining. For the first time in his life he was thankful for the long years of toil he had been forced to give to vineyards many hundred miles away from Overbrook. The future was enlarging in hope for him. How proud a possession knowledge of the useful always is! Knowledge of the useful, and of the beautiful!

The rest of the drive was truly invigorating, for hopeful happiness is a rare, instant tonic. To be an honored man among honorable men, to own the house he lived in, the vineyard he tended, to call what he

made his own and not another's, these things meant uplifting to Bernardo Barez.

Once more at the hotel, he left Max with some boys to whom the doctor had introduced him and went to his room. Standing alone at a window, he contrasted the past and the present. It was a dangerous pastime. It awoke hate, which was like a seething whirlpool in his heart. Men who had oppressed him in childhood and youth, passed in review before his mind's eye, and both his hands clenched nervously, while his face became like a bit of storm-scarred land. All the evil of his nature was at war against the good, and he longed to vent his hate on the hated ones. In his anger he turned himself from the window, and in turning caught sight of the trunk which had belonged to Mr. Anthon. The effect made the sight of him piteous. His hands fell at his sides; hate died out of his face, and a great sorrow took its place; his eyes lost their fire and sadness gave them their expression.

"If Mr. Anthon knew," he said to himself, "he would not be pleased. He would say I have been wrong — wicked — to think so of even my enemies. And if the God-man who lived once in the land of Galilee were here in this room, and knew all I have thought, he would be grieved. And I, Bernardo Barez, I would be the cause of putting grief upon him — upon him! It would kill me! I am glad he is not here; I am glad he cannot know — glad, glad! He suffered, and suffered, and suffered, — wrongs and hateful persecutions—and he did not hate his enemies. If he were here, and I knew it would make him glad, I would give up my hate for my enemies. Yes; I'd love to make him glad! I'd die to make him glad just once — just once!"

He walked quickly to the trunk, unlocked it, and took out the Bible. In a few minutes he was absorbed in what he read — the thrilling story of the One who could be spit upon, taunted, wounded, crucified, and yet could forgive and bless his enemies. Perhaps there were five hundred people in easy reach who could have told Bernardo that the Jesus whose written history so engrossed him, was as truly with him at that moment as he had once been with people in Jerusalem. But Bernardo's ignorance was not even suspected by any one, all taking it for granted that he knew the Bible truths which were so familiar to themselves. Mr. Anthon had tried to persuade the Spaniard to read the Bible and to believe its teachings, but until the hour of his death, when he heard the promise to read one chapter, success had never crowned his efforts.

As the poor fellow sat there that morning, reading, Max's laughter floated to his ears from the street, and he paused, glad to know that the boy felt merry. Max was getting acquainted with Terry Kirtman, and the parrot was assisting.

When night came, all Overbrook knew that Bernardo had bought the piece of property called Townedge and was going to plant a vineyard, living alone in the two-roomed house; also that Max was to live with Dr. Chellway, his guardian.

Terry knew more about the strangers than any one else, and he took keen pleasure in telling his home folk that Max was a church member, and was going to join the church to which Dr. Chellway belonged.

"And what about the gentleman?" his mother asked.

"He is not a church member, I believe. At least Max said something about his not believing in the Bible."

Mrs. Kirtman looked surprised, and Terry hastened to add:

"He may believe differently now. Max thinks he is reading the Bible his father gave him, to make up for having refused to read it all the while he lived with Mr. Anthon, you know."

Juvernia thought over these things a great deal, telling herself that she had not been far in advance of Mr. Barez about the Bible. She was surprised that the boy was

a member of the church, and wondered if her parents would let her join when she went back to Baltimore. She had an undefined dread that her mother at least would object to any public confession of her belief in the faith of the church. And if she should refuse to let her join the church, what then? The young girl sighed. But she decided that it would be right to obey her parents, and that if they refused to give their consent, she could still be a Christian out of the church.

The next Sunday morning Marion met with her class for the first time in weeks. She gave the papers back to their owners, each bearing a few written comments. But after handing Juvernia's to its writer, the teacher asked if she might not have it again to keep. Noticing some surprise on different faces, she said:

"It is not because it is the least faulty paper, girls, but I want it because its writer will never write its like again, and this will make me glad every time my eye rests on the paper. The best paper was written by Hallie Wayne."

This last remark drew attention to another girl, and gave Juvernia's warm cheeks a chance to cool.

Don and Julia McAwtry seldom went to Sunday-school, though as a general rule they went nowhere else during the hour. When Marion returned home on the morning just spoken of, Don was swinging lazily in a hammock, a book in his hand. He turned his head at sound of her step, and said:

"Well, saint, have you at last had a chance to tell Juvernia of her false views?"

"I think her false views are changed into true ones," Marion answered, going on into the house, though a change had come over her face at Don's words.

Unkind voices, and a very few words, can make hearts ache so! Our dearest ones often possess such voices, and the few words often come from them. Do they think of the hurt they have given?

Don smiled at his sister's answer, and speedily forgot the incident. Not so with Marion. She stood in her room — hers alone, her one luxury — and looked with utter hopelessness out of the window. "Why is it — oh, why is it that Don and Julia do not believe in me!" she asked. "It must be partly my fault; it cannot be all theirs. Sometimes Don seems to believe I am a hypocrite. Perhaps I am not loving enough towards him. Love means so much. And Don has a hard time, poor fellow! for home has no attractions for him — can have but few. No, I have not been all I ought to Don."

True-hearted, brave-hearted, unselfish Marion! Will her family ever realize what she is in the home, to the home-folk? What that home would have been without her, is an imagination that makes one afraid. She cared for everything, every one, in it, and if aught went wrong she was blamed for it by two members at least, often by more. Her dreamy father seemed to think that comforts of all kinds came from a place of plenty without anyone's effort, and with inconvenience to no one. Her suffering mother sometimes asked why Don and Julia did not do more to help, but she did not require them to do it, and Marion would not burden her with complaints.

Marion wanted her brother and her sister to see beauty in the lives of people who were Christians, and she knew they would surely be influenced by her life. To be a stumbling-block which should keep them out of the true way, was a thought that made her feel faint, and resolve to try to make all her ways the ways of purest love. "Then if my example is of no avail," she said to herself, "I will have done my best. It will please the One I desire most of all to please, and if others misunderstand, he will make it come right somehow."

It was about this time that Marion heard vague rumors of evil-doing among the boys of Don's set. Hugh Kirtman's name and

Ray Elliot's were much mixed in the reports, and Marion dreaded to have Mrs. Kirtman hear of this. As for Don, unless she herself could influence him, no one would. If home were an attractive place to him, perhaps he would not get into mischief elsewhere. Then came a thought that startled her. She must make it attractive. There were many times when her mother could bear the noise of Don's friends about the house and grounds, — but would his father ever allow it? She must find out; she must try to interest him in his son. Yet if Hugh, reared in such a home as his, could do the things ascribed to him, how could she hope to make Don come back from wrong by the attractions of their home? There must be a strong magnet to attract to evil such a boy as Hugh. Could that magnet be Ray Elliot, the traveled boy, the boy full of general information? No matter who or what, she must try to save Don.

Thinking thus, she set to work to interest herself in Don's affairs. This was not hard for a tactful sister to do, but it made Don wonder, and also seemed to make him surly and unappreciative. She kept straight on in her efforts, though, sometimes even asking little favors of him, and calling on him to do things she herself had been accustomed to do. She kept on doing them, too; Don had other business to attend to. He told Ray that "the little general," as he often called Marion, had taken to new tactics lately, and that maybe she had her eyes wider open than they thought. Hugh Kirtman heard the remark, and paled. He thought that he would be sorry if Marion knew about his doings, led by Ray.

CHAPTER IX.

MAX IS QUESTIONED BY BERNARDO.

A GREAT deal else happened at Overbrook while Marion was trying to win Don from evil to be his best self. Bernardo was establishing himself in his home, and Max was rapidly cementing his popularity.

The Spaniard had found it an easy matter to purchase Townedge, and his heart glowed with memories of Mr. Anthon all during the settlement, because it was Mr. Anthon's parting gift which made him able to buy. Mr. Barman was glad to dispose of the idle place, and people in general laughed at the Spaniard's simplicity in wanting to own it. But after a few weeks of his ownership had passed, the same people began to look with surprise at the change wrought, and when more weeks had passed, they declared there was not a neater, more promising place in all the town. Carpenters, masons and painters had made the house shapely and inviting within and without, and Bernardo himself had headed a number of workmen who put the several acres of land into much better condition.

It seemed to make little difference that there was no Mrs. Barez to keep house. The furniture was bought and put in place, a small cooking-stove not excepted. A single bedstead, much handsomer than Bernardo's own, was placed in the most desirable position in the room, and the man said to the boy over whom he had promised to watch:

"That is yours. Whenever you will, and the doctor lets you, come and stay with me, day or night."

Max went to Dr. Chellway's house the day that the Spaniard took possession of his home, but he spent a portion of every day with Bernardo.

Max and Terry had become strong friends, and the Kirtman boys and girls never went on an expedition when Max did not go. Thus he saw a great deal of Juvernia, and he told Bernardo she was like his father in more than personal appearance. "Sometimes," he said, "she acts so like I know father would have acted that I have to stare at her."

"Curious!" said Bernardo. Then he so lost

himself in thought that even Max was forgotten for the time. He was trying to recall what Mr. Anthon had said about his people, and could not do it. There was only a dim idea in his mind that Mr. Anthon had not been sure about having any people—any except Max. And at any rate the boy was the only one Bernardo wished to concern himself with, so he dismissed the subject, never failing, however, to feast his eyes on Juvenia's likeness to Mr. Anthon whenever he saw her.

The young people often passed Townedge on their jaunts, and as often as they did, Max would lead them to the spring under the trees for water, sometimes stopping to chat with Bernardo, who was always out of doors getting ready for the planting of his vineyard. But these chats were not enlivening to any except Max. The others did not understand the stern, keen-eyed Spaniard, and they thought he was shy of them and anxious to be left to himself. And thus it was with older persons. Bernardo never loitered about the stores or any of the other public places, and finally Dr. Chellway was the only man who ever attempted more than a passing remark with him. He lived alone among men. Even the doctor felt a reserve with him, and, strange as it may seem, never invited him to attend services at the church. In some undefined way he got the impression that Bernardo had a faith different from any represented at Overbrook, and that he did not want to be invited to any of the churches.

And all the while the strange, timid man was hungering for some one of the people who believed in and loved the great Bible Savior of men to speak to him about their religion. His untrained mind was crowded with questions he could not answer, and he thought regretfully of the great opportunity he had missed on the ranch when his friend was alive. In those days he had scarcely looked at the Bible; now he read it as a hungry man eats. He learned many passages that he might repeat them to himself as he worked with plow or spade, and one of these passages gave him unlimited wonder. It was where Jesus promises to be with his loved even unto the end of the world.

But the One who had uttered those words understood Bernardo's needs and was leading the poor fellow in the way best for him.

One afternoon when a sudden rain kept Max with his old-home friend, Bernardo was so silent and watched the boy so ceaselessly that it became annoying. He seemed thinking intently, yet Max could not make a motion that he did not observe.

At last Max changed his position, taking a seat on Mr. Anthon's trunk at the foot of Bernardo's bed. He leaned one cheek against the high footboard, and looked straight across the room to where the Spaniard sat in a chair tilted against the wall. The absent-minded watching continued, and Max said suddenly:

"What are you thinking about, Bernardo?"

Bernardo started. His face flushed until his cheeks tingled.

"I am afraid I have been stupid," he said. "I was thinking of some things your father used to want to talk with me about, and I was wishing I had let him do it. He taught you, Max; maybe you can help me out."

There was a pleading tone in the voice, and the boy felt curious.

"What is it you mean?" he asked.

"Some Bible ideas," the Spaniard said, as timidly as if it were a sin to speak of such; thus he showed the force of early training.

"If it is that, I know I cannot help you, — not at all," said Max.

"Anyway, you can tell me what you believe about the Bible and about Jesus."

"Why, that's easy," Max said. "I think the Bible is the Book that God told certain people how to write, and I believe everything in it. And Jesus — well, you know Jesus is the Son of God, and he left heaven

to live on earth in the form of a man, to prove to us how he loves us."

"He proved it truly," Bernardo said earnestly. "I have read how he suffered as we do; and he was abused by people more cruel than my enemies; mark that, Max — more cruel. And he really loved the ones who treated him cruelly; never hating or punishing them, though he had all power. He did good to all. Did your father ever say that Jesus took vengeance on any of those people, Max?"

"No, indeed. Jesus was too wise and too loving. Father told me about that very thing once. Jesus tried to make them understand and act differently, and see God's loving helpfulness. He was always sorry for suffering people, and was always wanting to help them."

"That he was! I wish he lived now," Bernardo said.

"He is living now. Father explained that too," Max said, eagerly.

"Yes, I know he could not be destroyed, and is living in heaven. But I mean I wish he lived where I could see him, and be with him," the Spaniard said, sorrowfully.

Max looked perplexed. How could he explain the Bible to Bernardo? Some man ought to tell him about things.

"You ought to ask Dr. Chellway about all this," he said. "I only know what father said."

A gleam of light was in the black eyes of the Spaniard. Mr. Anthon's authority was to him the best. He made a quick gesture with both hands, a gesture unfailing when he was in earnest.

"What your father said is the best I could possibly hear," he said. "Try, try, Max, to remember what he said about Jesus living with people now."

His vehemence almost frightened Max, who said quickly:

"Father said Jesus is with people now as truly as when he was with them in a bodily form, and can feel for us and help us just the same. If he had kept on staying with us in a body, he could have been with only a few at a time, to be seen of them. But as it is, he is with all who love him, all the time. He is in our hearts, and he is very near folks who are not good, wanting them to act differently, wanting them to love him. He is right here, in this room."

Bernardo's eyes seemed burning their gaze into the boy, and he said:

"Then he knows all about me. Is Jesus with you, Max?"

Without a moment's hesitation Max said, "Yes."

"Then I want you to tell me how you know it; how anyone can know it," Bernardo said.

"I'll tell you what to do; ask some grown person all these questions," the boy said in a worried way.

"You tell me what your father said to that, and I won't ask you anything else," the Spaniard said, persuasively.

Max felt ashamed of himself. He looked down at the floor and kicked one heel against the trunk as he tried to decide how to express himself. At last he said pleasantly:

"You needn't take this as true in every single case, Bernardo, but the reason why I know Jesus is with me is because I believe in God, in his Son Jesus, and in the Bible. And I love each of them, though not enough, I know. Then I love people, especially good ones. Father said that if I love God I will keep his commandments; the new one, too, about loving one another."

"Yes, I have read it," Bernardo said, sorrowfully. "And Jesus is not with me, because I do not love — my enemies."

Max said nothing. He wondered if he could love an enemy, if he had one. He made up his mind to tell Dr. Chellway about Bernardo. Then looking up gravely, he said:

"I do not mind having you ask me questions, Bernardo. Ask them whenever you

want to. I just think grown people know about these things better than I do, or any other boy no older than I."

Bernardo brightened. "You see, you can tell me what he said — your father — and I believe in him," he answered.

Nevertheless, he talked no more about the Bible that afternoon, but busied himself with a puzzle he was making for Max from small oak blocks — a mathematical puzzle. When the rain was over, and Max was ready to go, the Spaniard astonished him by saying:

"Max, I have a bit of warning for you. I want you to associate with boys of your own age. Let Ray Elliot and Hugh Kirtman and Don McAwtry and all of that crowd alone. They are up to no good, and can't do you any good."

"They don't want me; they think I am too small for them," Max said, laughing. But his face was red. He knew that the boys mentioned played cards, and played for money, but could not imagine how Bernardo knew it. And of course he did; else why his warning?

That night, sitting with Dr. Chellway and his wife, the former dozing over a newspaper, Max effectually aroused both by saying:

"Doctor, if you had some enemies who had abused you for a long time — years, I mean — do you think you could love them?"

"Enemies?" the doctor asked, changing his position so as to look directly at the boy.

"Yes; people who had gotten hold of you when you were little, a baby, and had treated you cruelly all the time, even after you were big."

"It would he hard to love them, my boy. Yes, hard. But, in a sense, I believe I could love them, especially if I knew as much about God and his love as I do now."

"But if you did not know so much, then you think you would not love your enemies, and still Jesus would be with you?"

"I believe he would be with me to an extent, but I would not know the full sweetness of his presence as I now do. I believe I would go on step by step in love to God until I could get to the place where I would love the ones who had been cruel to me."

"So you would not get discouraged in the start, and think you never could have Jesus with you, like you have him now?"

"I might become discouraged," said the doctor, very thoughtfully, "but I do not believe I would give up to it. It would not be right, you know. I would go to Jesus often about it, and he would encourage me."

"I can understand how it would be with a person raised as you were, but I do not believe it would be that way with a man who knows just next to nothing about the Bible. Seems to me some man like you ought to tell him things, and explain them to him."

The doctor looked at the boy for a moment without speaking. Then he said:

"If I knew such a man, I would be glad to tell him about the love of God, and the blessedness of having Jesus with us. You haven't come across any one who is in very great need of such instruction, have you, Max?"

"Why, yes. Don't you know about Bernardo? I thought you understood that he knows almost nothing about the Bible and God."

"Bless me, Max! What do you mean?" the doctor asked, while his wife put down her work to give undivided attention to the conversation.

"I mean no one has ever taught Bernardo about Jesus. Father tried to, but Bernardo would not let him. He was raised among people who knew nothing of the Bible."

"Well, I never thought of this! Has the man never read the Bible?"

Max gave a touching and vivid description of how Bernardo, through love for Mr. Anthon, read the selected chapter at the far-away grave. Then he said:

"I believe he reads in father's old Bible every day now. He is always asking me

questions I cannot answer — questions about Bible teachings. This afternoon he put me through a regular catechism. I wish you would talk with him. He is so timid about such things that he hates to ask anyone."

Mrs. Chellway looked distressed, and so did the doctor. "Why, Dollie, it seems impossible!" he exclaimed. "The idea of living among well-informed people, and longing to know these things, and not a man ever speaking to him on the subject! And what an idea he must have of us who call ourselves Christians! It seems to me I would better go to see him right away, this very night."

He half arose from his chair, but his wife said, smilingly:

"Now, doctor, don't frighten the poor fellow with zeal. Wait till to-morrow. I suppose we all took it for granted that he had had all the religious instruction he needed. We ought to have invited him to church. We could have done that at least — and always do with ordinary people, you know. But he is so peculiar."

"He just feels afraid that the people do not want to associate with him, because he is not of our nation," Max said. "He is proud."

"Well, I am glad you have opened our eyes," the doctor said. "I will see what I can do to carry on the work your father began. I feel ashamed and humbled, Dolly. Just hand me the Bible, please; we'll have prayers now."

Max thought that night that the doctor prayed as if he were talking face to face with Jesus and could not feel sorry enough for the way he had failed to understand the stranger in the town.

CHAPTER X.

HUGH'S DISGRACE.

FOR some time previous to Max's talk with Bernardo, a very grave trouble had been coming to a climax among the older boys at Overbrook. To understand just how such things enter the heart of a family and tear and hurt, will help us to see the Kirtman family as it was in those days, and to understand such boys as Ray Elliot.

Ray was comparatively a new-comer at Overbrook. His father had bought a good deal of land there and proposed to develop beds of iron, which abounded in the region. Ray had traveled about a great deal for a boy of his age, and yet had managed to be enough at school to gain a fair knowledge of text-books. He was a thoroughly-awake lad, well informed, of handsome appearance and pleasant manners. His knowledge attracted Hugh Kirtman at once, for Hugh had always been studious, and admired learning in any one. He found that Ray's fund of knowledge was varied, and, later, that some of it was poisonous. But he did not profit by this until he had allowed the poison to do a deadly work, even though he saw, all the while, shining at home, the warning, guiding light that ruled his mother's life.

It would have been impossible for Juvernia to be an inmate of that home at the time and not know exactly how matters stood; she was too bright a girl. Hugh had been very kind to her during her stay, at first going with her on many of the longer trips she and her friends were in the habit of making; but now he was seldom at home, and never accompanied them anywhere. Moreover, he was moody, cross and selfish, and domineered over Terry and Julian until it was unbearable. Julian bore this so meekly, and tried so hard to do things which would keep Hugh from showing his ill-temper, that it was almost pitiful to see him. Daily Hugh had to be reminded of neglected duties, and Juvernia never forgot the time when he blazed forth at one of these reminders, declaring that he was too old to do such work, that his mother was exacting, and that Terry and the girls were almost too lazy to live.

Mrs. Kirtman felt as if she were dealing with a foe with which she was not able to cope, when she sought to put her hand on Hugh's trouble. She was convinced that companionship with Ray was responsible for the change in her boy, but none of her lov ing words, none of her stern words, seemed to touch Hugh, or make him confide in her. She became very anxious, though a certain calm light in her eyes made one aware that she knew a Friend who could soothe even such apprehensive griefs as she carried from day to day.

Perhaps none of her children helped Mrs. Kirtman in those days as did the young girl for whom she was caring. Juvernia had told her about her talk with Marion, and had confided to her the doubts she felt about gaining her parents' consent to her joining the church, and there was a perfect understanding and a very tender love between the two. These things made Juvernia's silent sympathy and sunny disregard of annoyances seem more beautiful and helpful than they could have been otherwise.

Terry and Della made no attempt whatever to conceal from Juvernia their feelings over the change in Hugh, and on the grass at the foot of the lawn, the three held some very spirited conversations. One day Terry said, emphatically:

"Well, something must be done! I'm tired of the whole thing, and Hugh has got to come to order, if I have to make him!"

Della laughed, a little low, amused laugh that angered Terry.

"Laugh away!" he said in the still tone that meant warning. "I mean just what I say about Hugh. He has trampled over me long enough. I have to saw every stick of stove wood, and pump every drop of water that Julian does not pump. Sometimes I am so angry I feel as if I should fly all to pieces. It's just a crying shame the way he treats mother, too, making her sit up till midnight waiting for him to come home! I wish mother was a man! I mean to pitch in and fight Hugh some day!"

"It wouldn't do a grain of good, Terry," Juvernia said, seriously. "Think how much older and stronger Hugh is! Besides, it is terrible to fight."

"Pshaw!" said Terry, contemptuously. "The Hardin boys are forever fighting each other. And you needn't think Hugh is stronger than I am, just because he's bigger. My muscles are hard as rocks, almost."

Juvernia's face was white, and even Della looked a little taken aback. The idea of a real fight between her brothers was not at all pleasant, and she hastened to say:

"Terry, don't you dare to do it! It's wicked, I tell you, and mother would feel dreadful. You let Hugh alone. He's going to get into trouble before long, and he'll be glad enough to cool down and behave himself!"

"Get into trouble! Who? Our Hugh?" Terry asked, whirling from his back to his elbows so as to look into Della's face as she sat on the grass.

"Yes, get into trouble. The very same Hugh you spoke of fighting," Della said, looking as mischievous as she really was.

But Terry knew something about Hugh that he was afraid Della had found out, and the word "trouble" startled him. Juvernia said:

"You needn't mind Dell. She is only thinking about what Miss Marion said the other day — that suffering is sure to come of wrong-doing. And she said it is often the innocent who suffer, as well as the guilty."

"You are forever quoting Miss Marion!" Terry said, ungraciously, and then fell to thinking.

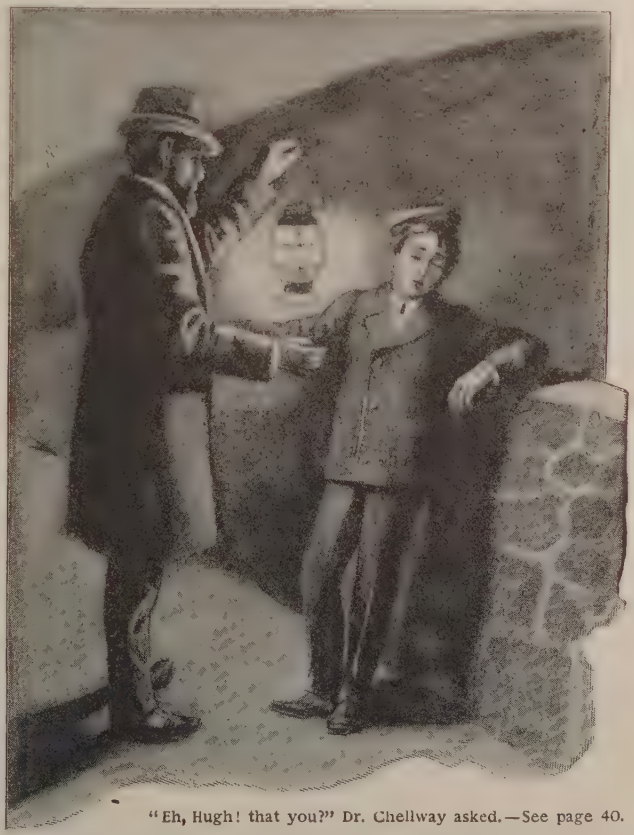
That very night Hugh failed to come home to supper. He had never stayed away from a meal before without letting his mother know his whereabouts, and she was disturbed, though trying not to be. She told herself repeatedly that she could not expect Hugh to be so careful always, and she tried

to be as cheerful as usual, lifting a silent prayer in her heart that help might go forth to the fatherless boy.

Just as usual the family gathered on the front porch after supper, Julian with his violin. He sat on the top step, his back against a post, and his earnest face turned oftenest to the drive that circled the lawn — for he knew Hugh would be apt to come home that way. Love such as Julian gave his mother is as clear of vision in a little fellow as in those who are older, and Julian felt that his mother was sadly troubled over the way Hugh was acting. The understanding of each other made a secret but beautiful union between this mother and child, and he felt the intensity of her emotions even when too young to know their exact nature. His large eyes sought her face frequently that evening, and he felt best satisfied when a smile answered his gaze. Juvernia asked him to give them some music, and, standing by the post, he played a piece for each one, his slender hands and fair head hovering over the violin with an air of grace, almost of caress, no matter whether he played the "Spanish Fandango" for Terry, or his mother's favorite, "Abide with me."

But long after the music was hushed and the family had separated for the hours of sleep, Mrs. Kirtman sat in her room, reading or thinking, waiting for Hugh.

Poor Hugh! The suffering which follows the doing of evil had traced his tracks in "seven-league boots," it seemed, and he, too, was alone, thinking. He was standing on the arched footbridge at one end of the church grove, one of the most deserted of



"Eh, Hugh! that you?" Dr. Chellway asked.—See page 40.

places at night. There was no moon at that hour, and the boy thought he was safe from sight. So absorbed was he in his own thoughts that he did not hear the steady oncoming of footsteps, until the snapping of a dry twig near made him turn. In an instant he recognized Dr. Chellway's tall form and

swinging lantern, and his eyes grew gloomier as he turned again to his former position. His motion had attracted the doctor's attention, and he held the lantern higher that he might see the solitary figure to better advantage, recognizing it as he stepped on to the bridge.

"Eh, Hugh! that you?" he asked cheerfully.

"Yes; can I do anything for you, doctor?" Hugh asked, turning around.

"Nothing at all, my boy," was responded. But the doctor put down the lantern and came over to where Hugh was standing. Leaning on the railing in the same lounging attitude, he was silent for several moments. The water under the bridge gurgled and rippled over stones and sand-heaps, the sound distinct and lulling. Suddenly Dr. Chellway asked:

"What's up, old fellow? It isn't just natural to see you out here alone, this time of night. Anything gone wrong?"

Hugh thumped the railing with the handle of the pocket-knife he held, and looked at the water in silence.

Another moment and Dr. Chellway's hand was placed on his shoulder, sending a queer thrill through the boy. He had known the doctor all the sixteen years of his life, and he knew that no other man took so great an interest in him. Yet he would rather that any other man in town had found him there that night than Dr. Chellway.

"Something has gone wrong with you, Hugh, and I know it," the doctor said, kindness pulsing through every tone of his voice. "I have been watching you for weeks, and a hundred times, perhaps, I have been on the eve of speaking to you. I was thinking of you when I saw you standing here just now. I have been a boy, Hugh, and I know your feelings. If you have been doing wrong, you can face about, my boy, and be the manly fellow we have been expecting you to become."

"That is exactly what I am planning to do to-night," Hugh said in an unnatural tone, almost defiantly. "I am facing about, and I mean to make a man of myself. But it will not be here at Overbrook. I leave town this very night!"

"Slowly, my boy, slowly!" said the doctor, his face growing grave. "Does your mother know?"

"Indeed she does not. She would oppose me to the very last, and I would have to leave anyway. I have piled up grief by the armful for her. She is the loveliest, bravest mother that ever tried to bring up fatherless children, and I am the one of whom she expected earliest and best results. To-morrow she will find out that I have been like poison that hurts and hurts and hurts without killing!"

"Hugh, you make me afraid! What have you done?" the doctor asked. The two now stood face to face, the lantern throwing a bar of light between them on the planks of the bridge.

The boy was nervous, and his words had excited him until his hands trembled violently.

"You will find out to-morrow," he said. "Mr. Barman will make sure of that. He's the one who brought me to my senses to-night! Let him wait! — a boy without a father can grow to manhood as well as other boys!"

The young voice was so full of bitterness — almost hate — that the doctor was fully aroused to the seriousness of his own position.

"What has Barman to do with you, Hugh?" he asked, quite calmly.

"I owe him money," the boy answered. "You sha'n't think me without honor, doctor. I will explain it all to you, because you have been a friend to us ever since I can remember. I have simply gotten in with a set of boys who have ruined me, and —"

"Hold right there, Hugh!" the doctor said. "It is unmanly to put all the blame on the 'set of boys.' Whatever trouble you are in,

you yourself must have helped to bring to pass."

Hugh turned his face towards the spot where a ray from the lantern, sifting through a crack between the planks, shimmered in the water. He felt his ideas toppling. He had been consoling himself with the thought that others had ruined him and his home life; now he realized that he himself was to blame for the ruin. He was not quite seventeen, but a bright mind, and rare home training, had given him a strong sense of honor and justice. He could admit error. So now, turning back, he said:

"You are right, doctor. I never saw it until now. I am responsible for it."

"Now tell me the trouble with Barman," Dr. Chellway said. "He is a hard man, my boy. He will not stop at anything which he thinks stands between him and his due. How much do you owe him?"

"I have cause to know he is a hard man," Hugh said, bitterly again. "I owe him twenty-five dollars."

"Why, how in the name of all that is reasonable can you owe him that amount?" the doctor asked.

Hugh flinched, as if at the prick of a surgeon's knife.

"It happened this way," he said. "A crowd of us boys have been playing cards for money. (I knew you would be shocked. The thing shocks me — now.) Well, I had no change one day, and one of the fellows kept on offering to lend. I took money, and then more of it, and more, hoping every time to win. But I lost. Well, I had used twenty-five dollars, and I found out a few days later that the boy who lent it would have to have it back at once. He clerks for Mr. Barman, and the money he lent me was not his own. Mr. Barman has been away, you know. He returned to-day. I have no money, and I would suffer everything before I would go to mother for such an amount to pay such a shameful debt."

"Why not go bravely to Barman and explain?" the doctor asked. "Then earn the money."

"I have been to him — call it bravely, if you like. I went to his house and talked to him honorably, and how did he treat me? As I would not treat a brute! Some day I mean to crush him, doctor! I mean to crush him down, as he has crushed me!"

"You will think better of that, Hugh. Before we go any further, I want to remind you that one who is a soldier of the Most High never needs to take vengeance. You have forgotten Whose you are, my boy. Now, remembering it, tell me plainly all that happened at Barman's. I believe your best Friend, and my best Friend, sent me to you this night. I am indeed glad he is always watching us."

"I'm not worth His watching, doctor," said Hugh, "and I am not fit to be called a soldier of the Most High. But I can tell you in a few words about the visit I made to-night. I saw Mr. Barman alone, and told him carefully how the debt came about, calling no names, however. I told him my mind was made up to break away from the evil, and that I would either work for him or for another man until I should have earned enough to pay him to the last cent, with interest too. Mr. Barman was in a rage, and when I am a man I shall thrash him for what he said to me. He means to see mother to-morrow and tell her the whole of it, and I do not mean to be here to see her suffer and the town stare. I am waiting now for the next train to leave town."

Dr. Chellway did not see fit to say that Hugh was in a rage. He knew the indignant, hurt, determined boy would scarcely heed him or regret the anger at that time. So he stood looking down at the bar of light, thinking, sending a swift message to where Power dwells and heeds the call of the needy. After a moment or two, he said quietly:

"Which is braver, my boy — to overcome your self-wrought trouble here, or to run

from its ugly face? It is the old question. Is it braver to grow back to a straight position at Overbrook or among strangers?"

"Oh, when it comes to that, it is braver to fight the thing through right here. But I simply cannot shake myself free from my companions in wrong, here in this town. There is no use in talking, doctor; I cannot live here and be free of them. If you would stand by me, I could live through this trouble; but I could not shake off the boys — they'd drag me back and hold me back."

"But bad boys are everywhere, Hugh. You cannot go to a place where evil associates will not be ready to claim a companion," Dr. Chellway urged.

"That is so; but I shall never again be a companion of evil-doers," Hugh said, resolutely. "I have always meant to become a doctor. I shall begin from this night to keep my mind towards that goal, and I shall finally reach it. I am through being of no account."

"Then make me this promise in connection with that resolve: Promise me, for your mother's sake, to be a Christian doctor."

"I wish I could become such a doctor, but I cannot make the promise, for defeat is all about my efforts to be a Christian."

"Then you can make another effort. And, listen to me, Hugh. Your father was a man noble through and through. I loved him; I love to remember him; I love his family. To-night I shall stand in his stead to you. I am going myself to see Barman at once. I think I can manage him in this affair — perhaps even get him to keep your name out of it. I will pay him the money the boy took from him, and I shall expect you to repay me. You may take your time, but you will owe to me the twenty-five dollars and the interest. And, Hugh, you shall have your way about leaving Overbrook to-night. But you must go on the train with your mother's knowledge, and the knowledge of the family. This is the only right way. Prove that the soul in you is not dwarfed by the weeks of sin you have indulged in — prove that, my boy. I want you to go home now and wait for me on the bench at the foot of the lawn. I am going to see Barman, then I will come to you and go with you to see your mother. You shall leave at one o'clock for Philadelphia, and I will give you a letter of introduction to a friend who will be of service to you if he can."

Hugh passed his hand several times over his brow, the damp hair clustering about it seeming to add to the whirl of his ideas. His plans had all been set aside, and other plans laid clearly before him — better plans, more honorable, plans with kind thought of others in them. Yet these plans held a leave-taking with his home folk, a confession to his mother. How he dreaded both! Thinking, he forgot where he was, and with whom, until the doctor's voice brought him back to such knowledge.

"Shall I find you there, Hugh?" was asked.

"Yes, I will be there," the boy answered, as if he were tired and very, very sad. Then he said:

"Dr. Chellway, I shall prove that I am grateful to you, if I have to down a thousand temptations before I do it."

"I can trust you, Hugh; I am sure of that," the doctor said, taking up his lantern and looking at his watch.

CHAPTER XI.

MR. BARMAN AND THE DOCTOR.

IT was almost eleven o'clock, and Dr. Chellway started away briskly, following a path that gave him a short cut to Mr. Barman's home.

When he reached it, Mr. Barman himself answered the bell, his feet slipperless and no coat adorning his stout figure.

"Why, bless my life, doc!" was his greeting. "Is that church-house of yours afire,

that you come ringing at my door? Come in, come in! You are welcome, whatever's up!"

Laughing, he led the way to the deserted sitting-room. Putting the lamp on the table, he turned to take a look at his visitor, the visit being a puzzle.

"Have a chair, doc," he said, pushing one forward.

"Can't sit down, thank you. I haven't a moment to waste," said the doctor. "I have come to talk to you about Hugh Kirtman and the money he seems to owe you."

The cunning eyes of the man twinkled. "So that is it?" he said. "The young scamp went to you to beg for him, did he?"

"No, he did not come to me, Sam. I found him, no matter where, and got the story from him. Now, Sam, I am not a man to say that sin is not sin; you know that. But no man need help a wrong-doer to ruin, especially a boy. I want you to show mercy to Hugh."

"Mercy? Fiddlesticks, doc! He got into the trouble—let him scramble out. It will do him more good than your coddling. He knew better; as you would say, he's been raised up right in the lap of the church. And, for another thing, I tell you that Sam Barman doesn't mean to lose by him nor by any like him. My money is my money, and justice is justice."

"You shall not lose by him. I have the money to pay you. But I want something from you, Sam — I want a promise. I want you to promise me to keep Hugh's name out of the affair; entirely out of it, understand. You can manage that if you will, and you are the only one who can. Remember that Hugh did not steal the money. He did not tell me who took it, either. We men must stop this mischief among the boys. We are the ones to do it, and we must do it at once."

The doctor was standing at an end of the table, the lantern still in his hand, and his voice rang through the silence so earnestly that it sounded like pleading.

But Mr. Barman actually enjoyed the novel position of being pleaded with by such a man as Dr. Chellway. There was no compliance in his voice when he said:

"Oh, as to this business among the boys, of course it must be stopped. Overbrook is too clean a place for it to be going on under the very eaves of the churches. The business must be stopped, and those who have engaged in it must be punished. Hugh Kirtman is no better than any other boy, and I say when a fellow does wrong, let him suffer the punishment. It is just."

Dr. Chellway's tall form straightened itself, and the lids of his blue eyes almost met as he looked straight at Mr. Barman, and, pointing a finger at him, he said:

"You are not the man to say that, Sam; you are not the man to say it. We've known each other a long time. We were at college together; we were young men together. Let your mind go back a number of years. Think: do you recall a time when you stood in need of mercy? Do you remember, Sam?"

Mr. Barman was sitting near the table, and during the doctor's last words he fumbled nervously with a pencil lying on it. He said promptly:

"Yes, yes; I remember. That's so, doc. I was in a tighter place than Hugh is in, too. And the mercy was mighty sweet, it surely was. I thought I'd be straight up and down all the rest of my life to pay for it."

Dr. Chellway's honest, kindly face was still turned full to that of his host.

"I knew you would remember it," he said. "But, Sam, you are not living right to-day. You know that. I wish you would be the man you might be, the man you ought to be."

"Oh, well, now, doc, don't go to preaching! You always reach down into a man's soul before you let him go," Mr. Barman said, protestingly. "Come, tell me what you want me to do for that boy;" and he

turned squarely to the table covered with business-like documents which he had been examining when the doctor came.

Putting down the lantern, Dr. Chellway took his medicine case from under his arm, rested it on the table, and opened it. From a socket where a bottle had once been he took a small, tight roll of bills.

"Here is your money — twenty-five dollars," he said, counting out the sum. "I want you to write a receipt in Hugh's favor, and I will see that he gets it. Then I want you to promise to keep disgrace from his name, Sam. To-morrow we will talk about the other boys."

Mr. Barman's pen was scratching away, the fingers of his left hand on the bills which the doctor had placed on the table. He nodded as he handed up the receipt.

"Oh, I'll do as you say," he said brusquely. "But what I do, I do for your sake, doc — all for you. There's not a man in the county can get around you."

After it was all over, Mr. Barman stood on his front porch and watched the doctor's lantern go bobbing across the road.

"He's going to the Widow Kirtman's now," he said to himself. "Wonder if folks would love me as they love doc, if I should go about doing like he does. Sometimes I get angry at him, and then again I'd fight a hungry lion for him. Yes, yes, he's a rare one, that same Jack Chellway! Stood right here in my house and told me I was not living right! I'd like to hear any one but doc tell me that! But I wish it was easy to be good."

He went in, locked the door and shuffled back to the sitting-room, muttering as he went. In a very short while thereafter he had dismissed the thoughts which had softened his heart, and was sleeping. He had put them aside as readily as one lays aside a garment. Yet they were not lost because of that. Who can say they were not given him in mercy, sent by the Friend who is kind to the just and to the unjust? Like seed on stony ground they rested in his heart, and some mayhap will spring to life.

Dr. Chellway hurried his steps as he walked towards the Kirtman home, and, as his feet touched the bridge, Hugh arose from a bench.

"Getting on to twelve, my boy; we will have to hurry," he said. "Let us go straight on to where your mother's light is shining. I have your receipt for you, and Barman has promised to do his best to keep your name out of the matter. I am sure he can do it, and I shall help him. And, Hugh, you need not dread the talk with your mother. She is a brave woman, and as reasonable a woman as I ever saw."

Mrs. Kirtman had heard the sound of talking, and the door opened before Hugh could rap. There was an expression of perplexity on her face as she beheld the doctor, and he laughed.

"There has been no accident to anybody, Mrs. Kirtman," he said. "Hugh is as sound as a dollar, and he and I have a little piece of business to talk over with you, that's all."

Hugh took the lantern, and putting it down in a corner of the hall, he closed the door and followed the others to the sitting room.

CHAPTER XII.

AT HOME WITH THE KIRTMANS.

EVERYTHING seemed unnatural to Hugh as he entered the room he had known since babyhood. He looked about thoughtfully, thinking that in a few hours he would be too far away to enter it, however he might desire to do so. And then came the moments during which he suffered mentally more than ever before. He had to sit still and see the lines of trouble settle on his mother's

face, and her surprised grief at his conduct bring a new expression to her eyes.

She listened without speaking to all Dr. Chellway said, and to what Hugh was compelled to say. Then the boy felt a great wave of love and admiration for his mother surge through his heart. She showed no selfish weakness, and indulged in no words of indignant condemnation. She wept a moment or two — what loving mother would not have done so? — then she controlled herself almost perfectly, and, looking at the doctor's sympathetic face, said:

"Whatever you think right, doctor, I am willing shall be done. I have no better friend than you, and I believe with my whole heart that God is with you and directs you always. Of course I have longed for Hugh to grow up, thinking he would lighten my cares and be an example worth following to the younger children. But if after all that has happened, it is best for him to form new associations away from home, I feel that I must not oppose the step, but will do just as you suggest. I am very confident that the Father of the fatherless has not and will not forsake my boy."

"I know the same thing, Mrs. Kirtman. I knew you would look at this matter in the right spirit, and be just and brave. I believe the step proposed will be for the best. And now," he added, "I see it is a few minutes after twelve. The train is due at one. If I am to see things through in my own way, I believe you would better wake up the children. And you will need all the time you have to pack Hugh's trunk, even with Elina to help."

It seemed to Hugh afterward that a lifetime was crowded into that one hour, and that more than a lifetime would be required to make him forget it. He took the small lamp which had been waiting for him, and went to his room with his mother, leaving the doctor to write a letter to his friend in Philadelphia. Then, in a few moments, all the others came in, and Hugh had to bear their looks of wonder and answer their eager questions.

Mrs. Kirtman had not waked Juvernia, thinking it best to have only the family present when Hugh should leave them. But the hurrying here and there, and the calls from one to another, would have waked a sounder sleeper than Juvernia. It was not long before she opened her eyes, and half rose, listening. That some one was very sick seemed certain to her, and, springing up, she was soon ready to leave her room. Hugh's door, down the hall, was wide open, and the sound of different voices issued from it. She thought of the trouble which had been predicted for Hugh, and went swiftly to the open door. She was filled with astonishment at the general confusion.

"Come in, my child," Mrs. Kirtman said, looking up from where she knelt by the trunk.

Juvernia was at her side almost before she finished speaking.

"Hugh is going away in a very few minutes," the mother explained. "We did not know it until awhile ago, and we will talk it all over to-morrow. Here, can you fold these towels for me? Terry dropped them."

It was Juvernia's nature to want to help wherever help was needed, and she folded the towels and hurried about doing a dozen other things which the half-distracted family were overlooking. The blue wrapper she wore made her fair face and hair look fairer, her eyes brighter.

Hugh was doing nothing. He leaned against the wall near his mother and watched her. He looked up, startled, just before she was ready to lock the trunk. Juvernia was standing at his side and had spoken to him.

"When you come back, Hugh," she said, "I may not be here. I want to thank you for having been so kind about going on our long trips with us. I hope you will have a

successful stay from home, and — wait! (Mrs. Kirtman, excuse me for whispering.) Lean down, Hugh."

The boy, surprised, bent his dark head close to the flushed face of the girl, and heard her whisper a few short sentences. Then she said good-by aloud, gave him her hand a moment, and was gone.

Hugh's face was flushed. Of course no one asked what Juvernia had whispered, but Mrs. Kirtman broke the awkward silence by saying:

"See what nice ideas she has! She did not want to intrude upon our last moments together, and so she said her good-by and went away. I have seen a great many women without half her tact and thoughtfulness."

"She is a nice girl, but she's queer," Hugh said. He was thinking of Juvernia's whispered words: "I shall talk to Jesus about you often. I want to tell you that I have learned to love him."

Hugh's trunk went to the depot that night on a wheelbarrow, Terry insisting on rolling it all the way. The little party was barely in time, and Hugh was trembling from a dozen conflicting emotions as he shook hands with the doctor in parting.

"The safe track, my boy!" the doctor said, heartily. "Hold tight to the truth that God loves you, and do your best."

Terry's uplifted face as he stood by the empty wheelbarrow near the lamp-post, and the florid face of the doctor, were the last things Hugh saw as the train rolled faster and faster from the station. How differently things had happened from the way he had planned! He chose a seat quite apart from the other passengers, and sat down to try to realize what he had done — what he was doing. By and by he felt for the purse put into his hand by the doctor, who had said that the contents came from his mother and from his father's friend. It was safe, and, not even looking into it, Hugh fell to thinking again.

When it was noised through Overbrook that Hugh Kirtman had gone to Philadelphia to enter the office of a physician, if possible, Mr. Barman smiled grimly. It was said that Dr. Chellway had managed the matter, and had even gone to the train with the boy, which gave Mr. Barman something to think about.

"Kind man, doc is," he said to himself. "Knows how to keep on being kind. I hope he will get paid! Good blood in those Kirtmans, though there is an awful amount of ingratitude in the world."

For days after Hugh's departure, Mr. Barman was often seen in company with Dr. Chellway, and between them the evil going on among the boys was quietly and utterly routed. None of the seven boys who were surprised in Ray Elliot's room by the entrance of Mr. Elliot, Mr. Barman and Dr. Chellway, are ever likely to forget the talk the doctor gave them, and not one of them lost an iota of respect or love for him, despite his plain words.

When the three men were alone, Mr. Barman slapped the doctor on the shoulder and said:

"Well, doc, the little cub will never grow to be a growling bear in this town, I think — not while you live here. But I am bound to say that the biggest gratification I have had in the whole affair was dismissing that clerk from my employ. I tell you this thing of forgiveness won't do every time, and I believe in just punishment in most cases."

"So do I," the doctor responded, "if we try brotherly kindness first. I tell you, Sam, we can find the hearts of young folks and turn them as we will, if we go about it with kindness born of the love that God puts in us. We ought to save when we can, not harshly condemn."

The day following Hugh's departure witnessed a scene in the Kirtman home which did a work never undone, a work the effect of which was felt through years. Mrs. Kirt-

man sat among her children — Juvernia also being present — and told them plainly all she knew of Hugh, and of the part Dr. Chellway had taken in his departure. I am sure a master-artist would have felt his soul aglow could he have watched the mother's face and the faces of the young people as the narrative progressed, and it would have been a wonderfully interesting picture had he transferred that scene to canvas; for each face was a true index of each heart, and the hearts were a-quiver with emotions. Then the mother said:

"This affair is ours now, children, and it must remain with us — go no further. And we must help Hugh all we can with our love."

"That's what we will do!" Terry said. "I have my lesson out of it, mother. I thought old Hugh was brave enough to keep clear of such things — brave enough and smart enough. He is a long way braver and smarter than I am, and so if ever I'm tempted to do anything on this order, I will turn and run; I surely will."

Della smiled at Terry's plan of escaping temptation, but Julian looked admiringly at him, feeling the earnestness in the words.

Each one had a good deal to say about Dr. Chellway, and Juvernia declared he was as kind as her father — which was the highest praise she could give him. "Father would do all the things the doctor does," she said, "but he would not be quite so — so loving I think it is."

She defined the exact difference in the word "loving," for Dr. Chellway was a Christian and Mr. Vann was not.

Down at the lawn bridge that afternoon, Terry asked: "Juvernia, do you remember that I said I meant to whip Hugh? Well, this is the way all my threats turn out. When I first heard about you, I said you were going to be airy, and I would have to duck you in the blue hole. You came, and proved yourself too good to duck. I talked about whipping Hugh, and then the old fellow made me feel like a cur before he left, by begging my pardon for having left all the jobs for me to do. Think I'll quit making threats!"

"I would; they don't prosper," said Juvernia, laughing. "Anyway, now that Hugh is away, you will have to be your mother's right-hand man, and grow up to take care of her and the place."

Terry looked at her with a questioning air. "Juvernia Vann," he said, solemnly, "you are a long way too earnest. I don't ever build an air-castle but you come along and tumble it to pieces! I had just made up my mind that when I should be as old as Hugh is now, I would go to Colorado and live on a ranch like Max used to do. And along you come and tell me I ought to stay here and plant the garden, and repaint the house, and stop the leaks, and buy the provisions!"

"I did not say that. I meant you ought to stay with your mother and do business of some kind here in Overbrook," Juvernia answered.

"Oh, of course! Hugh can go to a big city and see something of the world, but Terry must stay at Overbrook! Why, I wouldn't know an electric light if I should meet one walking in the road!"

"I don't suppose you would; they don't walk," Juvernia replied, with a spice of mischief.

Terry smiled. "Well, to pay you for that valuable information," he said, "I will give you a piece of news. We are at last going through the cave! Mother is willing because Dr. Chellway told Max that he will go. We are to start from his house at two o'clock to-morrow afternoon."

This was news worth talking about, and the young folks at Mrs. Kirtman's talked of little but the cave until the time to explore it came. They were gathered at the shady end of the porch about an hour before the time to start for the doctor's home, when they saw Max coming up the drive. He ran

up the steps at last, and sat down among the little crowd, fanning himself vigorously with his hat.

"No use, Terry!" he said. "I begged, but Bernardo will not go; says he is too busy. I never did see such a worker!"

"Nor I," said Terry. "I wish he would go."

"When I get to be a man," Max said, "I mean to make money by the thousands of dollars, and give Bernardo all the money he can want and all the pleasure."

"It takes more than money to make people happy," said Ellna. "I know some rich people who do not have much pleasure — Judge Rayfold, for instance."

"And Mr. Barez looks solemn enough to need more than money to make him sunny," Della said. "What makes him so afraid to mingle with folks, Max?"

"His past, I guess," the boy answered, almost unwillingly. "I do not know much about his life, but I do know that father thrashed me once for speaking roughly to him. Then he told me that Bernardo had been brought up in Mexico by cruel people who were perfectly ignorant of the Bible, and who claimed to be his guardians. They mistreated him shamefully, and he was almost dead when we found him."

"Found him? Where? How?" asked Terry.

"We found him on the roadside, not far from Denver. He was almost dead; all cut and bruised and unconscious. Yet there was not a soul in sight. It made me think of the Good Samaritan story in the Bible, when father saw him. He made our cowboys take him up and put him on one of our wagons, and we went back to Denver with him. We had just started home. We carried Bernardo to a hotel and father had him put to bed in a nice room. Then he called in a doctor, and he stayed right there until Bernardo was able to talk — father did, I mean. He paid all the bills, and when Bernardo was able to bear the journey, we carried him home with us. He had told father all his history at the hotel, and father's kindness was something he could not understand. But when he got strong and well the way he loved father was enough to make a fellow cry. And father grew to be fond of him. He said Bernardo was a noble man and must have known some people of learning or he could not use such good language. Father taught him a good deal about English. He never left us, and he was company for father, I can tell you. And I believe he would have died for father any day; he did love him so much!"

"And he certainly loves you," Della said. "I feel so sorry for him since I know a little about him!"

"But, Max, did Mr. Barez ever learn about the Bible? Do you suppose he knows about how Jesus loves people?" Juvernia asked earnestly.

"Father told him about it, and tried to persuade him to read the Bible; but I believe Bernardo was actually frightened at thought of it. The first time he ever read a line in it was when we buried father. But I know he has read it often since, and I think Dr. Chellway talks with him about it every once in a while."

CHAPTER XIII.

IN THE QUICKSAND.

MAX was right about Dr. Chellway and the Spaniard. The doctor's simple explanations of a few ideas that troubled Bernardo, and his simple faith, gave the Spaniard strength to cling to many truths he had not hitherto been able to grasp. He had reached the place where he saw that it is possible to forgive great wrongs, and was nearing the place where he could even say that Bernardo Barez could forgive wrongs done him.

Dr. Chellway was not allowed to forget his engagement with the would-be cave explorers — not at all; for the young people were clamoring for him before the clock struck two. They started off through the warm sunshine in fine spirits, and when they reached the spring were tired enough to rest and cool while Terry and Max went to the cottage for the old cave-keeper. His age and feebleness were not in the way of his acting as guide to those who wanted to see the cave, no accident having ever happened during his time. The old man had only to lead the way, furnish torches and pocket the fees. He was glad to gather up his torches when Terry called out that seven people were waiting for him, for it was seldom he had a chance to earn so many quarters. These particular seven quarters were handed to him by Julian just as he unlocked the wicket gate, and the others looked at the smiling boy in surprise.

"It's a treat — but not from me," explained Julian.

Dr. Chellway dropped a handful of silver back into his pocket, exclaiming:

"Hurrah! It's the first treat anyone has given me in six months, and I mean to enjoy it!"

"So do I!" exclaimed several other voices, as the party entered the cave.

There were various questioning glances, but a little deeper tinge on Juvernia's face revealed the treat-giver to Dr. Chellway, at least. Being actually within the cave at once drove the affair of the money out of the brains of the explorers, however, and they watched the lighting of the torches with the keenest interest.

Soon they were following the guide, their brisk walk changing to a slow, careful one, for the way had abrupt curves and rough descents. At various points they stopped to listen to the swirl of water, and the doctor related the fact that there was a stream flowing through the cave, though no one had ever seen it. Yet all could hear the water murmuring, and sometimes swashing as in small whirlpools.

At a considerable distance from the entrance to the cave, there were two oozy places of some extent, and it was suspected by some that what was called ooze was in reality quicksand. The level of the ooze was several feet below the narrow pathway which hugged one wall of the cave. Beyond the ooze, close to the opposite wall, seemed to be the deep channel of the hidden stream.

The marshy places were farther within the cave than ordinary explorers cared to go, and until Dr. Chellway's party of young people went in, years had passed since any one had been so far. The keeper said that he remembered a time when no one ever entered the cave without a coil of rope, the explorers dreading the many abrupt curves and precipitous declivities. "Most people," he said, "are glad enough to keep close to the wall and well away from the abrupt descents."

In that party, however, was one boy who by no means belonged to the vast majority known as "most people." He was Max Anthon. His mind was quick to investigate anything out of the ordinary, though he was not of a prying nature. Rather, he was polite to an unusual degree, never giving a look or asking a question which was rude. His life on the ranch had encouraged him to look into everything he saw in nature which was unfamiliar, and so in the cave he was all alertness. Once the guide spoke to him about walking too near the outer edge of the pathway, but fearless Max thought he could obey the warning and yet not keep so far back as to miss seeing over the edge of the path into the abysses. When the party heard of the ooze, they clamored to go on to that place, and the doctor readily yielded.

Once there, all paused to hold out their torches and look down. They could hear distinctly the swirl of the stream in its channel, and Max declared he could see some-

thing like the glimmer of light on water. The others gazed in the direction he indicated, and, holding his torch as high as possible, he stepped closer to the edge, forgetting every precaution. Years of damp had loosened the soil at the edge of the pathway, and as Max stepped boldly upon it a great piece caved away under his feet, and he, feeling the void, and the loss of balance, gave a blind spring outward. His feet sank with a dull thud into what people had always known as the ooze, his torch spluttering where it had fallen, beyond his reach.

Several sharp screams followed his wholly unexpected leap, and there was great commotion among the little company on the path, every one of them backing by common consent against the wall, as far as possible from the dangerous edge. The accident had happened so quickly that even Dr. Chellway seemed dazed, and, strange to say, Max was the first one to speak sensibly.

"Doctor, it is quicksand!" he called out, very much as if glad to settle a disputed point. "I have seen quicksand before, and this is it without any doubt."

The cave-keeper seemed stricken dumb. Holding his torch high above his head, he peered about, while all around him white faces clustered and frightened young voices questioned.

"Max, my boy, are you sinking?" the doctor asked, anxiety in every tone of his voice.

"Yes, I believe I am," Max answered. "But there's more sand, or less water, than where I have seen it before, so I do not sink as rapidly as I might. I am not hurt in the least, and there is a good deal more of me yet to sink. Perhaps my feet will touch firm bottom before I am uncomfortable."

He spoke with a brave hopefulness, but his words aroused every one to the need of instant action. What if there should be no bottom! Often the person from whom no one would expect a helpful suggestion is the very one to give it. It was so in this case. Scarcely had Max finished speaking, when Julian's clear voice said with ringing authority:

"Terry, go for a rope, quick, you and the keeper!"

No other bidding was necessary, and immediately his order was put into execution, Dr. Chellway saying:

"Yes, and run when it is possible."

Then turning to Max, he suggested that the boy try to come closer to them.

"Why, doctor, I cannot lift my feet an inch!" Max responded. "But I do believe I could see that stream if I had a torch."

"Never mind the stream, Max," the doctor replied. "Try to help think of some plan to get you back to us. Is there any sign of bottom yet?"

"No, I do not think so. I am still slowly sinking," Max said.

Ellna, Juvernia and Della were leaning against the wall, pale with apprehension of what might happen in that horrible place. Julian's face, upturned to the doctor's, looked like a white flower, and his eyes were alight with anxiety.

"I wonder if such a thing as a plank can be found," Dr. Chellway said, looking about as well as he could by the light of the torches. He went some yards further on the narrow pathway, but could find nothing in the shape of a plank or rail. When he returned, Max said hopefully:

"Don't be troubled, doctor. I can stretch my coat out taut, and lean back on it. That will help me to stay head out until help comes. I heard father tell about that plan once."

His cheerful way of bearing the situation helped them all to endure the enforced waiting, though each felt desperately that something ought to be done at once. Some minutes of useless thinking and acting followed, and even Max was secretly becoming alarmed, when several liquid, bird-like whistles startled all the little party. Max, however, clapped his hands and answered

with the same kind of whistles, then exclaimed:

"It is Bernardo!"

All turned expectantly toward the outward way, and soon the light of a torch glinted on the wet walls. Only a minute or two passed before the Spaniard was seen coming carefully along the path. When near enough, he said:

"I met Terry and the keeper. I was already inside, having changed my mind about coming, soon after you all passed my place."

"But how did you get in?" the doctor asked.

"The keeper's wife gave me a key," he answered.

But he had not taken his gaze from the boy in the quicksand since reaching the party, and now, smiling at him, he said, "You needn't be afraid, Max. We will have you out of that!"

He and the doctor consulted hurriedly, and the Spaniard showed some uneasiness when he learned that the journey from this point out required fully thirty minutes.

"It will then take fifteen minutes, anyhow, to get ropes," he said, looking at his watch.

"Also another half hour and some minutes to come back to us," the doctor commented.

By this time Max had become very uncomfortable, and, in answer to a question from Bernardo, he admitted that the suction was unpleasant and that the wet sand was chilling.

Bernardo went some distance further in the cave, hoping to find a plank or a pole, but returned without either. Max's situation was now alarming, his short, stout body having sunk to a point above the waist line. Had the sand been lighter, the water more in excess, he would already have been up to his neck in the dangerous bed. With his arms stretched out the length of the skirt of his coat, so as to hold it taut, he was lying back, hoping thus to retard the sinking.

The sight of him seemed to fill Bernardo with an unrest he could not conceal. He made several quick turns and looked eagerly in every direction, searching for a sign of something that might help Max. Then he hastily pulled off his shoes, and took from his pocket the gold watch which had once been Mr. Anthon's and handed it to the doctor.

Fear seized every one looking on, and Max, realizing what was about to happen, called out:

"Don't come, Bernardo! Please don't!"

"Why, man, it is not to be thought of!" Dr. Chellway exclaimed.

Both might as well have held their peace. The Spaniard's dark eyes glowed as he said:

"My life stands between Max and danger!"

With that he made a leap, gauging the distance with such accuracy that he struck the sand just in front of Max.

The young people caught their breath, dismayed, and Julian fairly panted in his excitement. The doctor was annoyed, and yet filled with admiration, knowing the grateful, loving heart of the Spaniard better than did the others.

The slightest exertion which Bernardo made to keep Max from sinking only quickened the ease with which he himself sank, and the doctor urged him to be as still as possible, trying to do nothing but keep Max's head out of the sand.

Bernardo had ideas of his own, however, and he had no thought of being idle now. "He must not sink deeper if I can prevent," he declared.

The minutes dragged on, and no sound of the rescue party could any of the strained ears catch. Dr. Chellway was becoming desperate, and the man who was risking his life for that of his benefactor's son seemed to divine it. He looked towards the party

on the path, a strange happiness lighting his dark face, and spoke to the doctor; and his words sent a thrill through every one who heard.

"Be at rest," he said. "It is well with me, no matter what befalls. And, doctor, I want to tell you that since the last time we talked together about Jesus, I have begun to know him as you do, and now I have no hate in my heart such as once poisoned my soul. Now there is nothing between me and the love of Christ."

"I am indeed glad for you!" the doctor said with emotion. "Thank God for his goodness! But hear me, Bernardo. You are not to think help will come too late. We need you here at Overbrook, and I feel sure that both you and our boy will be rescued."

The long strain, the weird scene, the solemn, though joyous, words, had unnerved Elina, and she sobbed hysterically. It was just then that Julian exclaimed with frantic eagerness:

"I saw a flash of light on the wet wall! They are coming! They are coming!"

Max turned his face toward the curve around which the rescuers would have to come, and the others sprang up with hope in their eyes. The doctor hallooed, and Terry's shrill whistle answered. Then the girls clapped their hands, and Julian laughed aloud, all calling out words of cheer to Bernardo.

Some minutes passed, however, before Terry and a half-dozen men came in sight, walking rapidly enough to make the hearts of the watchers thump with apprehension for their safety.

At last, almost breathless, the men threw down their burdens and looked with the utmost surprise at the boy and the man in the quicksand. They had thought that Max was the only one in peril, and the doctor explained in as few words as possible what had taken place.

These men — workmen who were building a house next to the cave-keeper's — had lived at Overbrook all their lives and knew the cave well, so they had been able to make good time coming in. They fairly bubbled over with admiration of what Bernardo had done, and one called out heartily:

"Hurrah! We can't spare the cave hero! Just wait a bit, Mister, and you'll see how quickly we'll have you out of that!"

"That's what we'll do!" the others said. And Julian beamed on all of them with his shining eyes and glad face, though Bernardo said:

"Take Max out first, my friends."

The men were stout of heart and of body, and they quickly set to work. With hammers, nails, an oak rail and two ropes, they made a clever rescue-machine which was dangling over Bernardo's head in an incredibly short time. Then the leader said:

"Put the ends of the ropes around Max, well under his arms, and tie them together. Now, Max, take hold of the round bar fastened between the ropes above you, and hold to it, if you can. We will do all the rest, and we will save you even if you are too tired to keep hold of the bar. Now then!"

They followed these plain directions with ease, and it was not long before Max felt the lifting-power of the crude machine, as well as the angry resistance of the sand. He grew faint and closed his eyes. The work went on in utter silence, and finally Max knew that he was free of the ooze. Then came the strange sensation of a slow, veering motion through space, his limbs feeling like logs dangling from his body. He was being moved around half a semicircle, as if the other end of the pole were in a moving socket at the circle's center, a point on the path. He did not open his eyes until he felt his feet touch firm ground, and then he heard a cheer that made his ears ring as he sank to the earth.

Bernardo was rescued in like manner, though not with the same ease, and it would be difficult to describe the scene that took place when he was safe among his friends.

Quite a number of the people of Overbrook awaited the party when they emerged from the cave, and, as soon as the story was told, Bernardo found himself a hero. Judge Rayfold insisted that he and Max should be immediately helped into his carriage, which was waiting for no other purpose, he declared. Both were already well cared for in the matter of wraps, but they were exceedingly uncomfortable, being weak, wet, chilly and burdened with sand. They were at once driven rapidly to their homes, the doctor with them, and nothing serious resulted from the adventure in the cave.

CHAPTER XIV.

MALCOLM RIPLEY'S RATTLE.

HUGH had been away about two weeks when these things occurred, and a few days after, his mother received a letter which filled her with anxiety. He wanted permission to go to San Francisco. While she was reading the letter, Dr. Chellway came in. He had just received letters from his friend at Philadelphia, from Dr. Bardeen of San Francisco, and from Hugh. Dr. Bardeen wanted Hugh to go home with him and enter his office, and he promised to do well by him. This gentleman was visiting Dr. Chellway's friend, and had taken a great interest in Hugh from the first time he saw him.

Dr. Chellway favored the plan, saying that the ease and rapidity of travel made California much nearer the East than was once the case, and that it was a fine opening for Hugh. Then Mrs. Kirtman and the doctor wrote letters and received answers, and in about a week it was decided that Hugh should go home with Dr. Bardeen. The boy wrote enthusiastically of all he meant to do and become, but his mother sighed, for she remembered the time when Mr. Ripley had started so joyously for the very city where her son was now going. Her thoughts seemed to have uttered themselves, for Julian said:

"Mother, do you remember about Uncle Ripley? Perhaps Hugh will go to that city and find out something about little Malcolm. Then we shall all be glad that he went."

"Yes, in that case we would be glad indeed," the mother said. "Even as it is, I shall not grieve, for God has dealt very tenderly with us all during Hugh's trouble. He can take care of the boy there as well as nearer home."

Juvernia took almost as much interest in the plan for Hugh as his own family, and she was not denied any part or knowledge of it. Often in the days of anxiety which followed his departure for California, she would mount her wheel and go for the mails, counting it high reward if she found a letter for Mrs. Kirtman. One afternoon she came up the steps waving a small, oblong package above her head. There was only that, no letter, but the package was from Hugh.

"Yes, it is Hugh's handwriting," said Mrs. Kirtman, cutting the cords.

"I guess it is a souvenir spoon, bought with Hugh's first earnings," Della said, looking on.

The others gathered about, and there was a shout of laughter when a baby's ivory rattle fell into Mrs. Kirtman's hands. It was not new by any means, and one of the hollow silver balls on it was broken. But Mrs. Kirtman's face was pale and her hand trembled as she turned the plaything about. Two letters, "H. K.," were carved on the handle, and she said in a hushed tone:

"This rattle belonged to Hugh when he was a baby, and when my sister started for San Francisco, I gave it to her for Malcolm. I have heard her say that the last time she saw her baby, he held the rattle in his hand."

"Then, mother, how did it ever get to San Francisco?" asked Elna, excitedly.

"That is a mystery," said Mrs. Kirtman, still examining the toy.

"I don't see any mystery!" exclaimed Della. "That Chinaman must have saved Malcolm and they finally reached San Francisco! Don't you know, mother, Uncle Ripley has always said he would never be surprised if he should find Malcolm? Why, this rattle means something! You will get a letter soon, I know."

"No one can guess what this rattle makes me think of," said Elina. "It reminds me of a hymn — the one that says 'God moves in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform.' I can't help but hope that he is taking care of Malcolm for his parents and will yet give him back to Uncle Ripley and Aunt Lucy. This looks to me like a sign."

"We will not hope for too much, daughter," Mrs. Kirtman said. "You know it has been a long time since Malcolm was lost. I think there must be a history connected with the rattle, and we will wait for Hugh's letter."

Terry haunted the office until that letter came, which it did the next afternoon, having been missent.

Every one was at home waiting for him when he ran up the drive, waving the letter and shouting vociferously. Nor was any time lost in opening it. It was written in Hugh's plain, concise style, and omitted no item which he thought would be of interest in connection with the rattle. He said he had been sent by Dr. Bardeen to carry some medicine and a message to a very sick man, and while waiting in a room he noticed the rattle hanging by the fireplace. It made him think of the history of his old rattle, and, going nearer, he was astonished to find his own initials cut on the handle of the toy. He was looking at it when the wife of the sick man came in, and from her he learned what made him feel that the rattle had really been his in babyhood. She said that more than twelve years before, her husband was coming home late one night when he found by the roadside a half-dead Chinaman and a white baby. He got help and moved the two to his house, and cared for them until the next afternoon, when a rich lady had them moved to a private hospital. In doing this the lady was actuated by the fact that the baby was evidently of rich parentage, judging from its clothing, and by the further fact that the man loved the child so much. She said she would see that the Chinaman had good care because of his kindness to the white child. After the strangers had been moved to the hospital, the rattle was found on the floor near the bed on which the sick man had lain. It was hung by the fireplace, and had been there ever since. The Chinaman died, without having regained consciousness, and a stranger adopted the baby and carried him away.

The woman offered the rattle to Hugh, after he told her about Loo-Fong and Malcolm, and he was only too glad to accept it and send it home. He wished his mother to do as she thought best about sending it to Mr. Ripley and telling him how it had been found.

"As for me," Hugh wrote, "I believe Malcolm is living, and that God is taking care of him. I believe Uncle Ripley will yet find him, and this old rattle may help in the search. Uncle Ripley is one of the best men I ever knew, and I believe that God will direct him how to look for little Malcolm."

Mrs. Kirtman read aloud the words, rejoicing that Hugh was bearing in mind the truths she had always tried to impress upon him.

Juvernia thought about Hugh's words, and they made her very happy. Her heart was like a flower, in that every drop of dew which fell upon it refreshed it, not being lost. She reasoned that if God could influence hearts, she would trust him to make her parents willing for her to receive baptism and unite with the church. She would ask him to control things for her, and

then she would do her best, feeling that, whatever the result, all would work together for good.

CHAPTER XV.

JUVERNIA'S TRIAL.

THERE was a wonderful sympathy between Marion McAwtry and Juvernia; wonderful because of the difference in their ages. There seemed to be a perfect understanding one of the other. They were often alone together, and so free was the girl in the young woman's presence that Marion read Juvernia's heart as one reads a printed page.

When Marion heard of Hugh's letter, and of its effect on her young friend, the two were sitting on the side porch where they had held their memorable talk about Juvernia's paper. Marion listened to the words about Mr. and Mrs. Vann, and God's hand in events, then she put her work aside and drew her chair closer to the step on which Juvernia sat; close enough to take the upturned face between her palms and kiss the smooth brow.

"You have learned one of the sweetest beliefs I have, Juvernia," she said. "It is this: that as we live more and more continually in the felt presence of God, loving him more and more, he gives us of his wisdom, and, as we express it, he guides us. You see, living with him — close to him — we partake of his nature, and I do not think it sacrilege to say we act as he would act in the same place. So, I do not want you to dread your talk with your parents. Only live with Jesus, and you will say the right words."

"Yes," said Juvernia, slowly, "I can see what you mean; but I do not know enough yet to reason as you can, and to remember the comforting things all the time. I feel so afraid, sometimes, when I wonder what papa and mamma will say and do when I ask them to let me join the church."

"Try to overcome it, dear," said Marion. "I believe that God regards with especial tenderness those among his children who feel weak. When you have your talk with your father and mother, ask God, and he will direct your words. I am sure nothing will cause you to give up your new life."

"Mother is very — determined," Juvernia said, hesitantly. "Somehow I feel sure she is going to be angry with me, and father will be too astonished to help me out. There is one thing that makes me so afraid to tell mother about any of it — so weak-feeling. Did you ever hear me sing, Miss Marion?"

The suddenness of the question brought a half smile to Marion's face. "No, dear," she answered.

"Well, some people think I have th promise of a beautiful voice," Juvernia sai , gravely. "Prof. Berze says it will be a marvelous voice, and mother is very pr d of it. She says she means to have it c ti-vated to the highest degree, and that I shall be called one of the first singers in the United States, anyhow."

"Well, where is there any trouble in that?" Marion asked, puzzled.

"Why, you see, mother means for me to be a fashionable, society young lady, and sing only on grand occasions and in grand places; never where I would like to sing — for sick people in hospitals or in their homes. And I would like to sing at church, too. I don't feel as if I ever could sing just to show off — and that is what mother would like. I am afraid she will be very angry when I tell her."

Marion face was troubled and sh said: "That is indeed sad. But why do you never sing at Sunday-school, Juvernia, or at church service?"

"Why, mother made me promise not to. She doesn't want me to sing much until I have been trained, and Prof. Berze says I must not begin my training until I am six-

teen, anyway. I might strain my voice, you know."

"There is some time yet to wait," Marion said. "If you should die before then, or I should, I suppose I at least will never hear you sing."

"Oh, yes, you can! Mother did not tell me I should not sing at all. I will go to the piano now, if you like, and sing for you. I guess mother never thinks that I may die."

"I would like very much to have you sing for me if you are sure it will not be disobeying your mother," Marion said. And Juvernia arose at once.

The room that contained the piano opened upon the porch where the two were sitting, so it was but a moment before Juvernia struck several chords on the piano and began to sing. The words were simple, telling of rain on thirsty leaves and dusty highway, but the voice was the fullest of melody, the clearest, that Marion had ever heard, and she sat motionless, fearing to lose a word. From the rain-song Juvernia glided to a hymn, and then to another hymn.

Soon after her first notes had sounded on the air, a door further down the hall opened, and Mrs. McAwtry's gray head was thrust out. For months she had not left her room, but was feeling better that day, and quite company-like, in a new tea-gown, Marion's gift. With slow, careful steps she came into the hall and sat down in a chair which seemed to have been placed there to tempt her. In a moment Mr. McAwtry joined her, each smiling at the other, and both listening.

It had been so long since Juvernia had sung, that singing seemed to lure her on from one tune to another, all unconscious of her audience. Mrs. McAwtry sighed as the music ceased, and her husband went quickly back to his room to avoid detection.

Marion entered the room where Juvernia was.

"I think they were perfectly right who told you that you have a beautiful voice," she said, helping to close the piano. Then she put her arm over Juvernia's shoulder, and they moved towards the hall, Marion saying that she believed music found its way to many hearts seldom touched by spoken words. They had reached the hall by that time, and Marion laughed delightedly when she saw her mother's expectant face.

"Why, mother," she said, "you have complimented Juvernia more highly than she knows!"

The lady looked at the young singer and said: "Well, my child, if angels sing very much more sweetly than you do, I shall revel even in anticipation of the time when I may listen to them."

"I had no idea you were listening, Mrs. McAwtry. I am glad you enjoyed it," Juvernia said. "I would dearly love to sing for you often. Send for me sometime when you want singing, and I will sing in your room, if you would rather."

The pleasure this proposition gave to both the invalid and Marion made Juvernia think in a conscience-stricken way of the weary days she might have helped to brighten already. Casting about in her mind for something to tell the sick lady, something that would cheer her, she remembered Hugh's letter and the rattle. Mrs. McAwtry listened with deep interest to the story and said she had always felt that Malcolm Ripley was alive.

But twilight was fast deepening, and Juvernia had to leave.

The spin home on her wheel was delightful, and Julian was waiting for her on the lawn bridge.

"I had started after you; mother has a cablegram for you," he said, delightedly.

"Why, that's like grown folks, isn't it?" Juvernia laughed. "I have never had even a telegram all to myself before! Let's hurry."

She had jumped from her wheel before the bridge was reached, and she and Julian

walked up the drive, the little boy wheeling the bicycle, and telling Juvernia how the message had frightened his mother, because she thought it was for her and contained something about Hugh.

When they reached the porch, Mrs. Kirtman held out the sealed envelope, saying:

Just then Juvernia glanced at her.

"Mrs. Kirtman, do you think I can bear this?" she asked.

Her voice was so hushed, so calm, so pleading, that Mrs. Kirtman was alarmed. Rising and going to the young girl, she asked:

"Bear what, my child? What is it?"

Juvernia began to sing.—See page 56.

"Read the message, dear. I am afraid it is to say that your parents are coming home and you must leave us."

Juvernia tore open the envelope and read the message. Was it only once she read it? Her eyes gazed steadily at the paper such a long while, and her face looked so surprised. Nobody spoke, though each one watched her.

"Surely," thought Mrs. Kirtman, "no one would have sent bad news to a child!"

For answer Juvernia put the paper into the lady's hand, and slipped away to her room, shutting the door behind her.

Mrs. Kirtman read aloud: "'Your father very sick. Be ready to come if called. O. V.'"

"It seems to me she should have sent the message to you, mother," Ellna said.

"It would certainly have been kinder to Juvernia to do that. The message sounds almost cruel. But I suppose the poor lady

was too nearly crazed to think of being tender with her child. I will go to Juvernia; Elina, you see that supper is made ready."

She went to Juvernia's room, and found her standing in the middle of the floor, her hands clasped back of her head; this was an attitude she almost invariably took if alone and thinking deeply.

"Mrs. Kirtman!" she exclaimed, dropping her arms at her sides, "do you believe mother means that father is going to die? If he should, away off from me, do you think I can bear it? Why, I would feel as if the sun were never going to rise any more if another message should come saying he is — dead."

There was nothing childish about the young girl's bearing, not a petulant tone in her voice, not a tear in her eye. But her face was as white as her dress, and she seemed pleading for comfort.

"Poor child!" thought Mrs. Kirtman. "She is quite dazed with the suddenness of it all!"

Sitting down, she drew Juvernia to her lap, saying, "I think your father must be very ill indeed, my child, or your mother would not have sent you such a message. But I also believe that the girl who has made us all love her so dearly, will be able to bear bravely any grief that God lets come to her. Do you remember about his love?"

"I was trying to remember how kind and wise God is, when you came in," Juvernia said. "He couldn't ever be unloving. Are you very sure he knows just exactly how I feel?"

"Very sure indeed," Mrs. Kirtman answered, her own voice trembling.

"Then I know he feels sorry for me, and will do the very best for me, even though I — I may not understand it," Juvernia said. "I think he would like for me to be patient while I wait; and I do want to please him, so I will try. Let's go to supper, Mrs. Kirtman, for I know they are waiting for us."

The woman who had lived through years of suffering felt a thrill of wonder as she listened to Juvernia's words and comprehended the force of the sweet new love in her heart. She held the girl close to her for a moment and kissed the lips beginning to quiver, then put her away without a word and led the way from the room. But she thought of the words:

"Higher than fear and stronger than fate,
Are the love and faith that patiently wait."

When the two entered the dining-room, Terry and Della tried hard to appear unobservant and to continue talking, and Elina showed her sympathetic heart by her flushed cheeks, tear-bright eyes and unusual talkativeness. Julian was not present, a fact Juvernia overlooked, and Mrs. Kirtman understood perfectly. He was devoted to Juvernia, and her grief was his, touching him so keenly that he was lying, face down, on his bed, sobbing.

Juvernia resolutely tried to put the message from her mind, and talked of her visit to Marion, surprising the family with the statement that Mrs. McAwtry had sat in the hall for a number of minutes talking with them. She did not say what had brought the lady there, for she felt that she wanted to hold attention from herself as much as possible. Yet the family knew well that the girl's heart was with the father she loved so devotedly. She proved this by saying as they left the table:

"I feel glad whenever I remember how easily mother is excited, Mrs. Kirtman. It makes me hope that the next news will be good news."

"I believe it will!" Elina said, brightly. "Being off by herself would naturally make her more anxious than she would be if at home with her friends about her."

Some minutes later Julian came out on the porch, bringing his violin, just as usual. He played nothing but bright airs, and his face lit up whenever Juvernia applauded or laughed. She felt his sympathy, for some-

how sympathy is always recognized even when veiled.

The young people were quite alone for some time that evening, Mrs. Kirtman and Terry having gone immediately after supper to see Dr. Chellway. Mrs. Kirtman knew that he would find out at once when the next steamer left New York for European ports. The doctor was full of active kindness, as usual, and undertook to make every arrangement, even to securing an escort to New York for Juvernia, should it be necessary for her to go; and Mrs. Kirtman returned home much relieved.

"You are not to worry one moment," she said, as she kissed Juvernia good-night. "The doctor says that if he can do no better, he himself will go with you to New York."

Whereupon Juvernia said she wished he would go all the way to Paris.

It was almost three o'clock the next day before the longed-for message from Paris came. Mrs. Kirtman was reading aloud to the young people, and was in the midst of a fascinating chapter when Julian arose hurriedly and went out of the room. The reading ceased, and Juvernia sprang towards the front window, her face crimson. She saw Julian meet a messenger boy half-way down the drive, and then begin running houseward. She sat down and looked timidly at Mrs. Kirtman, alternately rumpling and smoothing her dress. "You read it when he gets here," she said.

So Mrs. Kirtman opened the cablegram, and in a moment her face was beaming.

"Listen!" she exclaimed. "Here is the message: 'Your father out of danger. Have written. O. V.'"

"Hurrah!" shouted Terry, with a force that showed his relief, and he joined in Della's hand-clapping. Julian's countenance was flooded with quiet delight, and in the general rejoicing Juvernia threw herself into Mrs. Kirtman's embrace and wept convulsively.

"Never mind, dear; never mind!" the lady said, soothingly. "We understand how it is! You have endured such a long nervous strain that these tears will do you good. It is not because you are unhappy, so cry all you will." She accompanied her words with caresses as soothing, and soon Juvernia's tear-stained face was covered with smiles.

The girl wrote a long letter to her mother that afternoon, but very nearly every other sentence began with the words, "Tell father." She was so overjoyed that her mind dwelt on him continually.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE OLD TEXAN'S LETTER.

THE next day Mrs. Kirtman sent a long letter to Mr. and Mrs. Ripley, telling all that Hugh had written. The rattle was also sent, and never did another toy rouse such floods of memories as did this one in the hearts of the two people who received it. Hope awoke to a strange new birth, and Mr. Ripley began at once to prepare for a trip to California.

Their sorrow had never done other than sweeten the religion of the Ripleys. They still felt sure that God directed for them and would seek to bring good even out of what seems to mortal vision unmixed sorrow.

"We will do what seems right, having asked God to direct us," Mr. Ripley said, "and then trust the outcome to him."

"And we must remember how long ago it was that the Chinaman died at the hospital," said Mrs. Ripley. "We will not be too hopeful."

Hugh met his uncle when he arrived in San Francisco, and though he had no further clue to the mystery, his face was alight and his tongue full of hopeful words.

Mr. Ripley went first to see the woman who had given Hugh the rattle, and found that she could tell him nothing of consequence. She said that the man who adopted the baby was fine looking, with fair face and hair and well dressed. He was of middle age.

"Is the hospital still here?" Mr. Ripley asked.

"Oh, yes; and you may possibly find a nurse there who was in it when the Chinaman died," the woman replied.

Taking the directions, Mr. Ripley went at once to the hospital. He was so far successful as to find a man who distinctly remembered the death of the servant and was glad to relate all he could about the white child.

"The Chinaman was not far from death when he was put to bed in that room I showed you," said the man. "He seemed to have been tramping for some distance, for his shoes were in tatters and his clothes very dusty, though the baby's clothing was clean. The way he kept his face always turned toward the child made me think he was not so unconscious as we thought when we first saw him. Nobody had the heart to carry the little one from the room. He never made a cry that the Chinaman did not move uneasily, and once he said quite plainly, 'Me takee to boss-man! Hushee!' Of course we were all anxious for him to recover and tell us his history, for there was a general interest in the beautiful boy, whose clothing proved that he belonged to people of refinement and wealth. The doctor asked the sick man the name of the baby, but could get no answer. We called the little thing 'Mr.' because his clothing was marked 'M. R.'"

"I feel perfectly confident that you speak of my son," said Mr. Ripley. "His name was Malcolm Ripley. My Chinese servant was named Loo-Fong, and he was as faithful to me as a dog to his master. Tell me more of them."

"Well, sir, there is little more to tell," the man said. "The Chinaman died the third night after he was received here. Some gentlemen clubbed together and gave him a decent burial, for sake of his evident faithfulness to the child, and before you leave I will give you directions about finding his grave. There was an old miner, originally from New York State, who thought so much of the Chinaman's care of the baby that he bought a granite post for the grave's head, and had cut on it the words, 'A Faithful Servant.'"

"God bless that miner! I am glad he was from my state," said Mr. Ripley. "Now tell me what was done with the child."

"We kept him for several days, then he was adopted by a gentleman who was a stranger. Things happened very rapidly then, as they do now, and pretty soon the incident was forgotten because of other incidents fresher, and just as full of interest to us, of course."

"And you cannot possibly recall the name of the man who adopted the baby?" Mr. Ripley asked.

"No, but I can easily find it for you," was the gratifying reply. "We keep a record of important happenings, and doubtless the gentleman's name was noted. I will see. Just wait here a few moments, while I speak to Dr. Kennebrew."

He stepped briskly away, and after a few minutes returned with a slip of paper on which was written, "Mr. Anthony, Colorado."

"That is the name of the stranger as he gave it, and the name of the state to which he was going," the man said. "This is the only light the record throws on the matter."

"It is light, at least," responded Mr. Ripley gratefully. "And now I will take the directions as to how to find the grave."

When he did find it, he lingered on the spot a long while, writing a letter to his wife while there. He told her of the old miner's

inscription on the head-stone, and added, "You remember we tried to teach Loo-Fong about the true God, and God's love, and how he might know him here. I feel sure we may believe he has heard our Lord's 'Well done, good and faithful servant.' The belief comforts me."

But Mr. Ripley was to see many of his hopes regarding his son come to naught. He remained in the city a number of weeks and advertised freely in many papers, especially in those of Colorado. But he received no answers to any of them. When all hope was exhausted he turned his face homeward, just after mailing an advertisement to the leading paper of every large city in the Union.

Hugh felt like going with his uncle when he left, and his company would have been a blessing to the disappointed man. The journey was a sad one, and the meeting with his wife was full of speechless tenderness. Then they sat down in their childless home to talk over all that had happened while Mr. Ripley was in San Francisco, and especially of everything relating to the boy, who even then might be in dire want, needing the care his parents longed to give him.

"The new hope we felt, and your visit to that distant city, makes an altogether unexpected interlude in my life," Mrs. Ripley said. "I had long ago ceased to think it possible that Malcolm had been saved; then came the news that awakened every nerve of expectancy and every old longing to see my boy. And now the news is as nothing, and my hopes have shuddered themselves back to silence. I do not believe the baby you heard about was Malcolm."

"I do; and I even dare to believe that I shall yet see him!" her husband answered. "When, I do not know. In God's time. I can wait. But if I never do see him, I will still trust God."

"Yes, I could not live without my belief in his care over and love for me. But, Harmon, can you see why all these things should have been revived and brought up from a dead past?"

"I somehow feel that the hopes we have recently had were forerunners of a joy to come. And I shall not strangle the feeling. If it is never realized, we shall still have God with us, and we know he will bring all out for the best."

"You always cheer my spirit, Harmon, and lead me closer to God," Mrs. Ripley said, smiling. "I do not understand this, but I shall try to believe it is all for the best somehow. I will wait patiently with you for God's time and the full unfolding of his plans."

And then day followed day, and they tried to settle back into their old calm way of living. They seldom spoke of the matter, but never a day dawned that each one did not wonder if it would bring a response to any of the advertisements. A month of silent suspense drew to a close, and on its very last day a letter came from Texas. Its writer was Daniel Mann, and in untutored language he said that near the time mentioned in the advertisement a traveler had bargained with his wife for a month's board. The traveler was a tall, fair man accompanied by a boy baby and a black boy who was nurse for the child. The man, who was very pleasant, called himself Anthon, and the baby Max. He finished his business in the month, and then left for his home, somewhere near Denver, Colorado.

The letter closed with this sentence: "The man and the boy hitches in mighty well with your advertisement, fur the only bit uv news he give uv hisself the whole time he was here was that he was jest from Californy, though I'm bound to say he didn't mention 'Frisco."

"It is very plain that the man speaks of Dr. Chellway's Max," Mr. Ripley said, sighing. He was well acquainted with all the happenings at Overbrook, as his wife kept up a brisk correspondence with her sister, Mrs. Kirtman.

Mrs. Ripley took the blurred sheet of paper in her hand and read it almost amusedly.

"I will send this to sister, for Max," she said. "He will be interested in it, I am sure."

That letter was the only response any of the advertisements ever received, and the reply which Mr. Ripley sent to the Texan was handed around among the entire family connection, and kept in the big family Bible.

"That Mr. Ripley is a rale Christian; I can easy see that," said the old man's wife. "He bears his trouble like a hero, he do. And, Daniel, me and you will jest quit grievin' because the Lord took our Mandy. That letter's spoke to my soul so as I can trust the Lord's dealin's. I believe in Him, and I believe He will do the best, jest like Mr. Ripley says."

Thus it came to pass that wandering souls were brought back to God by Mr. Ripley's influence, though he was hundreds of miles away and a stranger.

Mrs. Ripley sent the Texan's letter to Mrs. Kirtman, who read it aloud to her family and then gave it to Max. He and Bernardo, as well as Dr. and Mrs. Chellway, enjoyed it greatly. Then Max put it away with a few other mementos of his father.

"Now, Della," he said mischievously, "if I were not father's son, perhaps I'd be your first cousin. Your mother would be my aunt, and your aunt would be my mother."

They laughed merrily over the idea.

After Dr. Chellway had read the letter, he grew very serious and thoughtful, and finally went off to his office. There he sat at his desk some time, thinking, before he fitted the key into the lock and turned it. Then he took from a pigeon-hole the letter Bernardo had brought him from Mr. Anthon, and read it with the greatest care. One part he read twice. These are the words:

"There are some facts connected with Max which I would relate if I had the strength to write so much. But you will know all some day, and silence until then does not matter."

"Mysterious, at any rate," the doctor murmured. "I would like to know how I am ever to learn anything about the boy. That is, unless Bernardo knows these hidden facts. I believe it is my duty to ask him. I keep on recalling the fact that Tom never mentioned his wife to me; and, if Max is his son only by adoption, he may be Ripley's lost child. Yes, I will go to see Bernardo this very night."

The doctor locked the letter away, got his stout stick and set out for Townedge. It was no unusual thing for him to spend a free evening with the Spaniard, for the two now held congenial views about Bible truths, and both found help and enjoyment in these conversations about the life with God.

The doctor found Bernardo sitting on his front steps, resting after a day's hard work. Their greeting was cordial, and in a few moments they were seated according to their ideas of comfort — their chairs tilted against the wall — in Bernardo's room. Dr. Chellway went at once to the point by asking:

"What do you think of the letter the Ripleys sent to Max?"

"I think the Texan meant our Mr. Anthon and Max. It seems very likely to me."

"Yes, it does seem likely. Tom must have lost his wife very early. Did you ever hear him mention her?" Dr. Chellway asked.

Bernardo looked thoughtfully at the floor for several moments, and then said:

"If he ever spoke of her to me, I do not remember it. No, I do not believe he ever mentioned her."

"Now, Bernardo, I have a reason for asking you these questions," said the doctor. "I will not try to get information in an underhand way, but I ask plainly, do you know anything connected with Max — anything like a secret, I mean?"

The Spaniard's keen eyes fastened their

gaze on the doctor's face, and the color on his own cheeks deepened.

"Yes," he said, "I do; don't you?"

The doctor's chair came to the floor with a thud, and he rested a hand on each knee as he looked excitedly at his friend.

"I do not," he answered. "What is it? Anything serious?"

"Nothing serious so far as I can see. But I am surprised that you do not know about the box. I thought Mr. Anthon told you of it in his letter."

"What box do you mean?"

Again the Spaniard looked down at the floor, and after a long pause he said:

"If Mr. Anthon did not mention it to you, I may have done wrong to speak of it. But I cannot see how or wherein. If I did not know you love God, I would suffer tortures before I would say another word about the matter to you. But promise to respect my confidence, and I will tell you about the box."

"First, let me say this: Suppose there is good reason why others should know what you know; what then?" asked the doctor.

"There is no reason why anyone ought to know about the box. It concerns no one but me, unless I die before the boy is of age," Bernardo said. "In that case it will concern you alone until he is of age."

Dr. Chellway looked considerably puzzled, but he answered:

"I promise, then. According to your statement, what you know is by no means what I thought it might be. You see, I had gotten it into my brain that you hold proof that Max is not Mr. Anthon's son."

The Spaniard stood up. "Oh, no, no, no!" he exclaimed, vehemently, looking straight at the doctor. "Not many days before Mr. Anthon died, he gave me plain instructions as to what to do. And he gave me a box to keep. He said the boy is to know nothing about it until he is twenty-one. Then he is to have it, to open it, to know what it contains. If I die before that day, you are to have the box in keeping. That is why I thought you knew about it."

"The letter told me nothing of it," the doctor responded. "Do you know what is in the box?"

"I do not. Mr. Anthon told me it contains articles which closely concern Max. That is all I know, and all anyone else shall know, so long as I live, until the boy is twenty-one."

He took a key from his pocket and unlocked Mr. Anthon's old trunk. From under a half-worn suit of Mr. Anthon's clothing in its bottom, he took the ebony box and carried it to Dr. Chellway, its brass bands and locks gleaming in the lamplight. Bernardo thought of that other night when he had carried it to some one else.

The doctor fingered the box a little curiously. "It is a handsome affair," he said. "Tom had a liking for unusual and elegant things even as a college boy. Now, I would give much to know what is inside this, and I feel as if we ought to know."

Bernardo reached out and took the box, saying no word until it was in its accustomed place. As he put the trunk key in his pocket, he said:

"What that box contains concerns Max, and I have orders about it which no human being can make me disobey. What Mr. Anthon said to me is law!"

He looked almost tragically earnest, and Dr. Chellway smiled despite his uneasiness.

"Tom surely put it in a strong tower when he confided it to your keeping," he said. "You are a faithful friend, old fellow, and it is worth a good deal just to know how faithful you are. All my hope is that Tom did right to make a mystery of the contents of the box. But I fear he did not. Did you ever hear the story of the Ripleys' loss?"

"No — that is, not a very clear one."

The doctor gave the true account, and Bernardo felt much interested. He admitted that it was barely possible Max was not Mr. Anthon's son, but his own part, he

said, was to keep the trust imposed by the dead, and no matter what proof the box might contain, the time for disclosure was not yet.

So the doctor tried to dismiss his anxieties and to forget the box. Feeling that he had done all he could, he was now ready to leave the future with God.

Dr. Chellway tried in every way to do his duty by Max, entering him at a fine school as soon as the session opened, and feeling a father's interest in the high stand which the boy at once took. He had feared that ranch life might have unfitted Max for school and would make his first year one in a very low grade, but Mr. Anthon had cared well for the boy's education, and he readily entered Terry Kirtman's grade, and the first place in it became his.

CHAPTER XVII.

MRS. VANN BECOMES INDIGNANT.

JUVERNIA found the days a little more tiresome when Terry and Della and Julian were all at school, but it was then she learned more of the lovely character of Elina Kirtman, and received ideas which did her good forever.

September passed, and almost all of October. Then came a letter from Mr. Vann, saying that he should expect Juvernia to be ready to go with him to Baltimore the last day of the month, his own return being a little hastened.

This letter had various effects. Juvernia was both saddened and gladdened by it. She would be very glad to see her parents, her home, and even Cynthy, but she could not bear the thought of leaving her "home folk" at Overbrook. And the letter saddened every one of these "home folk." Mrs. McAwtry heard the news with a sigh, for she knew how she would miss the song-bird who cheered her lonely hours. The Chellways and Bernardo were full of regret, and the Spaniard astonished Juvernia by stopping her on the street to tell her of his sorrow.

"I may not see you to tell you good-by at the suitable time," he said. "And I want to say I shall miss you when you are away, because you are so much like my memory of Max's father."

"How I thank you for the words!" Juvernia said, smiling brightly. "Max's father must have been a good man and a kind one. I am glad to look like him."

"Well you may be, for he was princely in his looks, and like kindness itself in his heart," was Bernardo emphatic response. Then he added earnestly, "The beauty of his life was on account of companionship with Jesus. He also lives in your heart."

Waiting for Juvernia a few steps off were a number of school-girls. They heard these words and felt a thrill of wondering admiration for the foreigner and his devotion to the Savior so newly precious to him. But they were thrilled again when they heard Juvernia's clear, sweet voice reply:

"Make that a daily prayer for me, won't you, Mr. Barez? I want it to come true, and — and I am afraid there are some who do not."

"I will. And do not fear. God is able to dwell where all the earth and the lower world desired he should not. He delivered me from those who would have torn me in pieces. You can never have such foes."

The Spaniard's words silenced Juvernia's fears, and, shaking hands with him, she went on to her waiting friends. The next day she was to leave for home.

Mr. and Mrs. Vann came to Overbrook for Juvernia, variously impressing the people who saw them. Her father fairly lifted the girl off her feet in the bear-like hug he gave her. He kissed her over and over in his joy. Her mother's greeting was much more dignified, though she scarcely removed her gaze

from the blue-robed little figure during the journey to Baltimore.

And when Juvernia ran into the hall at home, old Cynthy exclaimed rapturously: "Light o' my eyes, how you is growed! And the gold in your hair is golder and the pink on your face more like a rose dan ebber!"

At the supper table Juvernia said, "It will take days and days and days to tell all about Overbrook. And I mean to hear pages about Paris, so you may begin to think up everything that happened to you."

And the days came, and the days passed, and each one really did hear something related of Overbrook and of brilliant Paris. Mr. and Mrs. Vann listened with deep interest to the account of the Spaniard and of Max, and Mr. Vann laughed heartily over Bernardo's idea that Juvernia resembled the one-time ranch owner. Mrs. Vann did not laugh.

"You do not resemble anyone I ever saw, except my only brother," she said. "You do look strikingly like him, and are like him in your nature, too — in being headstrong, for instance."

The last words were accompanied by a faint, half-sad smile, and Juvernia wondered at the remark.

"I wish your brother had lived," she said. "I have always wanted an uncle; even a headstrong uncle would be better than none."

"Your mother and I never have agreed about that brother of hers," Mr. Vann said. "I say he was not at all headstrong, and I am sure a truer, better friend never breathed. Tom Anthony was a prince in appearance and heart. Ah, he'd be just the uncle for you, if he should come to light!"

"Come to light? Why, what do you mean, father?" Juvernia asked, her eyes large with wonder

Mrs. Vann arose with dignity and walked from the room, while Mr. Vann felt a wave of heat pass over his face and neck.

"There now!" he exclaimed, "I have told your mother's one secret! Listen, Blondy Cap: You must never mention it in her presence; never mention it to any one but me. Your uncle may be living; he may be dead. If living, he may come home to us some day. Your mother has never heard of his death, though she believes he is dead. She loved him very, very dearly, and she cannot bear to hear him talked about. That is why she went away."

"Poor mother!" said Juvernia. "I will never forget what you have said and talk about her brother. If she speaks about him, I will try to be careful in what I say."

"I knew you would understand," Mr. Vann exclaimed heartily. "Seems to me you are a considerate little woman since your stay at Overbrook."

A wistful look entered Juvernia's eyes. She thought of the beautiful truth she had learned in the little town, and wondered if more of every good attribute of character came to one with the knowledge of God's love. It did not once occur to her that a person might have that knowledge in a sort of way and yet not himself love God.

There were a dozen questions about her uncle which suggested themselves to her but she asked none of them, respecting her mother's feelings in the matter.

It is strange, but just as true, that such natures, shrinking from inflicting pain, are often themselves pained ruthlessly. Juvernia was no exception. That very evening the mother whose feelings had been shielded by the girl, inflicted bitter pain on the young heart.

The family was in the sitting room, Juvernia busy with her books, for she had entered school and was intent on making up lost lessons. Mrs. Vann was embroidering, but paused for several minutes and regarded the young girl intently. Then, smiling, she said.

"Well, Juvernia, I am delighted at the result of your summer. And I am so glad that Dr. Chellway, and that other paragon of perfection, Miss McAwtry, did not make

a Puritan out of you. Every change I see in you is for the better."

Juvernia closed her book, and the wistful light again entered her eyes. She glanced at her father, who was beginning to tire of his paper, and, making a real effort, she said:

"There is a change in me, mother, and I am sure it will never do me any harm, though I somehow feel you may not like its cause. I have been wanting you to lead to a mention of it, because I think you and father ought to know. I have been cowardly, perhaps, not to tell you sooner. While I was at Overbrook, I learned a great deal about the Christian religion. Jesus is very different from what I used to think him, mother, and because of what he is to me, I am changed, as you say."

Mrs. Vann had grown stiffer and stiffer as Juvernia talked. Then a smile that made the girl cringe curved the mother's lips. Turning to her husband, she said:

"Mr. Vann, I wish you would listen to this child!"

She looked back at Juvernia and went on: "So you are afraid I will not like the cause of the change in you! People might differ as to the cause, perhaps. You say it is because you love the Christ of Bible history. I was under the impression that every one who is enlightened has a reverent love for his character. Why should I not like your 'cause'?"

"But, mother, Jesus is more than a character in the Bible to me," Juvernia said eagerly, her hands trembling as they moved the books on her lap. "He is a real friend, living now, and staying with me, and I love him so that I want my whole life to be used for him; and I was afraid you would object to — to some of it."

There was the rustle of a newspaper as it fell to the floor, and then Mrs. Vann stuck her needle in the velvet and put her work on the table.

"And what marvelous thing do you propose to do as a beginning in this 'whole life' affair?" she asked. "I certainly shall object if you want to enter a convent."

"Oh, no, mother, not that!" Juvernia answered. "I want you to let me be baptized and join the church — our own church, you know; and I want to use my voice for Him."

An absolute pallor overspread the haughty face of the lady, while her eyes glowed unpleasantly.

"It is the effect, not the cause, which I dislike," Mrs. Vann said icily. "And if ever I was amazed, I am now. You want to join the church, and you want to devote your voice to so-called sacred music. Look at me, Juvernia! I say you shall do neither! Do you understand? Whoever put such notions into your head would better have been dreaming, and if ever I see Miss McAwtry I shall give her a piece of my mind."

Juvernia's breath was coming and going in dry sobs, and she could not speak. Her mother turned to Mr. Vann, saying:

"I suppose you will believe now that I have some sort of insight. I told you it was risking much to send Juvernia among those people."

"I am sure they are good, mother," said the loyal girl. "They only made me understand something of what it means to be a Christian. Please, mother, do not go against me."

"If going against you means refusing to let you join the church, and refusing to let you throw away your voice, then I shall certainly go against you. I see you are thoroughly full of 'pious' ideas, and once more I say that that altogether too self-important Miss McAwtry is responsible."

Here Mr. Vann saw a tear roll down Juvernia's cheek, and for the first time he found his voice.

"I never before heard that Christian ideas harm one, my dear," he said to his wife.

"Well, you will learn that they do, if you sit still and let this slip of a girl have her way," was the angry response.

"There seems to be no need for my word, one way or the other," he said calmly. "But I can see no need for all this ado. Juvernia knows what she believes, and it strikes me she has a very good belief — my mother's exactly. If one loves the Lord, why not give him one's best, and act to give him praise with all one's talents?"

"And pray what good is to come of such a belief? How is she to be benefited?"

Mr. Vann looked helplessly at Juvernia, but her eyes met his unflinchingly. "It is life everlasting," she said softly. "Life with Jesus here, life with him hereafter."

"Since you are so wondrous wise," said Mrs. Vann, "I suppose you will admit that there is a divine command bidding you honor your father and mother — to obey them? Now your mother commands you to let this subject severely alone."

"But wait, Ophelia!" Mr. Vann said. "What is your objection to letting her join your church? It seems to me she understands what she is about."

"My objection is that if she is encouraged she will be a regular saint, and I want no such daughter," Mrs. Vann said. "You yourself know that Juvernia goes into nothing with half a heart. She will be giving money to every call the church ever makes, will pose as a Lady Bountiful at hospitals, among poverty-stricken nobodies, and for aught you know will consider it her duty to go as a missionary to the heathen."

"She would better do a little missionary work on me first," the father said. "I say let her join the church and sing the music she wants to. I will not put so much as a straw in her way. She has my permission to follow her own heart — and you know, Ophelia, I have never before disregarded your way of control in her presence. I am not a Christian, but I ought to be, and I won't hold another back."

"Mr. Vann, you would let that child have her way if it killed you!" his wife said. "If she joins the church, she does it against her mother's authority. That is my final word. I do not want to hear another sentence about it." She took up her embroidery, settled down in her chair and went energetically to work.

The evening was rendered too unpleasant for concentration of mind on text-books, and soon Juvernia put them away, asked to be excused and went to her own room. No matter if the tears did fall then. One was with her who comforted her with comfort such as the world cannot give. When she fell asleep, Peace seemed to have kissed her face.

Mrs. Vann meant that Juvernia should be nothing more nor less than the most accomplished belle of the city, and she was greatly disturbed because of the girl's new ideas. She determined to vanquish them by fostering worldly ideas, and she determined to be sweetly patient.

Full of such feelings she went down to the breakfast-room the next morning. She expected Juvernia to come in with a defiant manner and to speak in unpleasant tones. She was considerably surprised. Juvernia entered the room with her usual air of fresh cheeriness, and her voice was as laden with happiness as ever it had been in the past.

"She has gotten over it bravely," thought Mrs. Vann. "She did not have her heart so set on those things as I feared, and perhaps I won't have any trouble with her."

Trouble she certainly did not have. The days passed as of old. Juvernia honored her mother by obedience, and never did she mention in her presence the forbidden subject. Her father knew the girl well enough to understand this. And more: he felt sure that being prohibited from joining the church was by no means the death-blow to Juvernia's belief or faith, or whatever else she might call it, and he decided to talk to her about it. He wanted to know what she meant to do in the matter. When he asked her, his heart throbbed with pleasure at her answer.

"You know, father," she said, "joining the church cannot make one a real Christian. I believe I do right to obey mother, and I hope it will not cause me to love Jesus any less. Perhaps further on I can win her consent. I am only afraid she will never give up my voice, and I would so love to use it just for Him, not merely to show it off."

"You keep your religion safe and wait," her father said. "I believe you will even win your mother to believe as you do, for she is not so unfeeling as she tries to appear at times. She would make a lovely Christian, and could do so much if she would."

"I am sure you love Jesus, father," was the unexpected response to these words.

"Well, love is a mighty big word, daughter — it has an ocean of meaning. No, I do not believe I love him. I never have tried to understand much about him; been too busy, it seems."

"I wish you would try to understand about him now," the girl said, her small hand nestling closer in his.

"Oh, I've been reading about him here lately," he said. "And you believe he is with you?"

"Yes, I am sure he is," she said, a look of joy in her eyes.

"Well, suppose you tell me what makes you so sure of it," he said.

"Why, I find that I can and do talk to him as I would talk to any one else whom I love."

A mist came into the eyes of the father. "Tell me more, Juvernia, of how you talk to him," he said.

"Do you remember when you were sick at Paris?" she asked.

"Yes, I remember the time perfectly," was the reply.

"Well, the first night I knew of it," Juvernia said thoughtfully, "I told him it seemed as if my heart was coming to pieces because I could not see you or do one thing for you. I told him I felt sure he was sorry for me, just as he was sorry so long ago for a man in Capernaum whose little daughter was so ill. I told him I felt sure he was caring for you."

"Well, daughter, after you told him this, did you feel any happier?"

"Oh, yes, papa. I felt that it was all right and that I could go to sleep without any trouble. It rested me so much. Then, the next day, the good news about you came. I am sure God himself comforted me."

"And I believe it, too, you granddaughter of my mother!" Mr. Vann said lovingly.

"But, you know, father, it was not because I am your mother's granddaughter."

"No? Well, what then?"

"It was because of being with God. I am so happy when talking to him!"

Such a calm, beautiful light was in the girl's face as she said this, looking confidingly into her father's eyes, that he pressed her hand and smiled back. "I understand," he said. "But it seems to me I have heard somewhere that God does not always do what good people ask. Now, if I had died, how would you have felt?"

"You see, it is this way, father: He is so much wiser than ever I can be, that I should have tried to trust him whatever happened. If you had died, I would have been full of grief, but I hope I would have loved and trusted him still."

"Then it seems to me you have a safeguard against woe," her father said. "You can suffer, but cannot be overwhelmed. Happy little woman! May you keep your trust in divine love and wisdom!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

HAPPENINGS AT OVERBROOK.

THE months passed away quietly enough to Juvernia, and delightfully to Juvernia's mother. Never before had she felt so proud of her daughter's school record or of her conduct at home.

Juvernia and Della carried on a brisk correspondence, and occasional letters came to Juvernia from Marion and from Max. Thus she was kept informed of the happenings at Overbrook, while some Overbrook names became familiar in her home. In February arrived a letter from Max which she read a number of times and put away with care. It was about Bernardo, and what it related happened as follows:

One blustering morning early in the month, Bernardo hailed a passing boy and gave him a note to be delivered to Dr. Chellway. "Bring me an answer, and I will pay you," the Spaniard said.

When the boy delivered the note, Dr. Chellway was greatly surprised, for it contained this message:

"I want you to come to me to-day if you can. I need your counsel.

"Bernardo Barez."

"Was the man sick?" he asked the boy.

"Didn't look like it; he came out in the wind to see me," was answered.

The doctor did not lose time, but went at once, hitching his horse in front of Bernardo's beautifully-kept grounds.

Bernardo met him half-way down the walk, thus dismissing all idea of sickness. The house was as snug and clean as if a careful woman had it in charge, and the doctor was soon enjoying its warmth.

"I would have gone to your house, doctor, but could not bear the thought of interruption," Bernardo said. "I won't keep you longer than you want to stay, and I am grateful to you for coming. You know, doctor, you have been of so much help to me in my study of the Bible, and you know, too, that I have tried to study it closely."

"I certainly know the last," Dr. Chellway said.

"Well, now I want you to ask me any questions you will, and judge by my answers if I am fit to be numbered with Christians. If so, I have decided to be baptized and received into church membership with your people."

The doctor's face was illumined. He looked at the man before him with the keenest enjoyment, and his happiness bubbled forth in laughter.

"I have no need to ask you a question, Bernardo — not a question," he said. "Your note surprised me into thinking you must be ill, and now I am here to find you are a whole man! You do not need me to question you, old fellow. I know you."

"And I know you," the Spaniard said. "If you feel satisfied with my answers to your questions, then I can go boldly to talk with the preacher. But I need your questions."

The doctor looked for a moment or two at the glowing coals, his mind going in a rapid review over all he had learned of the Spaniard's past. Through starvation and other cruelty his childhood had passed, to life as a youth utterly miserable. He had literally dragged his suffering body and soul through later years until found by Mr. Anthon. Not for one moment did the doctor doubt that God had sent Mr. Anthon to Bernardo. The poor outcast had been given the rights of manhood by his friend, and had been pointed to the way to snatch his soul from the evil. And now, in a Christian community, he desired publicly to confess his belief in Christ, to be numbered with his "friends." The thought almost overpowered the warm-hearted, emotional doctor, and, looking up, he said, heartily:

"Just tell me, Bernardo, what makes you think you are a Christian?"

A subdued radiance overspread the Spaniard's face. "Among other things, because God has become everything to me," he said. "You know, away out in Mexico, there are some who have treated me as you would not treat a dog that had just robbed you of your last morsel. I used to hate them bitterly. I meant to go back there and kill them. You remember I told you in the cave that I no

longer hated them. Well, I feel now that I would even be glad to do them a service — that I could not do them the smallest harm. Oh, it is amazing, it is sweet to feel so! This is forgiving one's enemies, doctor. I thought it could never be, when I read that Jesus bids us love enemies. But I do it. He knew it could be, and that it would give us more joy than our hearts can hold. I used to dream of taking vengeance; now I only dream of telling those people what I know about the Bible, and about the Nazarene who was and is Jesus. I want them to have the joy I have; I must help them get it! And feeling these things makes me want to be counted in with the people who are known to be his friends."

The doctor's head was on the high back of his chair; his eyes were closed, and his face betrayed the emotion which he was trying to control. At last he laughed softly, even as he wiped his eyes. Then he said:

"Tell me more about your feelings, old fellow. It makes me happy to hear you."

"And it warms my heart to talk about these things with you," Bernardo said. "I am sure it is because you feel as I do — that Jesus is a friend ever present, all-wise, and loving past our comprehension. My comrade-friend, Mr. Anthon, told me much about these things, but I then believed them not, so I did not listen. I am now so happy, I feel that he knows even the smallest incident of my life, the events also, and will seek to shape them all for my best good, no matter how it may look from my standpoint. I believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that God is Love, and that I shall be with him eternally!"

Again the doctor laughed softly and his homely face was aglow with feeling. "You have as good a right to be a church member as any man I know, Bernardo. You are what I call a genuine Christian. The minister cannot ask you a question that will hinder you. Go to him any day you will, and if you want a friend along, call on me."

"Will my nationality go against me?"

"Bless your heart, no!" the doctor said. "It could never keep you out of heaven, and we'd be a fine set of mortals to let it keep you from our church membership."

What Bernardo said to the preacher, Dr. Chellway never knew. But the talk was satisfactory, for there came a Sunday when the little church was crowded because of the interest so many felt in the Spaniard who on that day was to publicly confess his love for Christ and unite with his people. No one knew a single evil thing against him, and many knew much good of him. He joined the Bible-class at Sunday-school, and his knowledge was so thorough, so full of earnest belief, that Dr. Chellway did not rest until Bernardo consented to be a teacher. Ere long the boys in his class seemed inspired with new energy and devotion, and more scholars came into it, Don McAwtry among them.

CHAPTER XIX.

REMARKABLE THINGS ABOUT DON M'AWTRY.

A CHANGE had come over Don. Perhaps Marion had had something to do with it. However that may be, he had been improving for some time, and now his sister often wondered how she had gotten along without the help he gave. He had been out of school and at hard manual labor for several months, earning fair wages. Half of his earnings he put in his father's hand at each time of settlement, and it seemed to do the old man good to receive it. Yet he immediately handed the money over to his wife, telling her to spend it as she saw fit. He seemed prouder of his boy and of his earnings for the few months than he had ever been of Marion and her earnings during all

the time she had been the stay of the family.

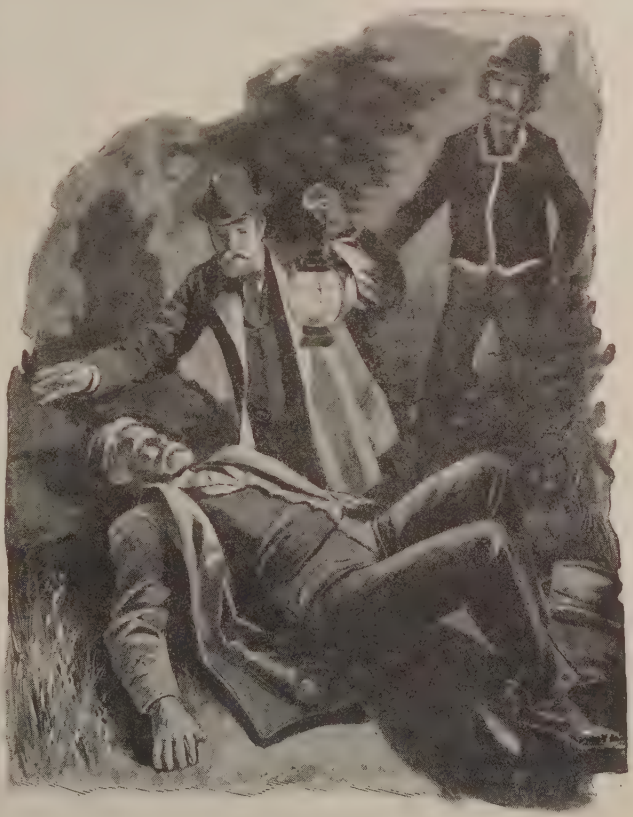
Marion did not seem to notice this. She was gladder than any one else of the change in Don, and not long after the boy entered Bernardo's class, he had the grace to tell his sister that her influence had made him desire to make something of himself. This was hidden manna to Marion, and she spent not a moment in grieving over what seemed like injustice from her father to herself. Life had now new beauty to her as well as to her feeble mother.

It seems almost beyond belief that just as they were at the height of their new enjoyment, the thing which happened should have happened. It was one of those events which people never feel sure they rightly understand.

It was early in April, and rain had been falling steadily for several days and nights, so that the stream was much swollen and at places impassable. The fourth night of the rain was exceedingly dark, though only a fine mist was falling. Dr. Chellway and Bernardo had been to see a very sick boy in whom both were interested. Returning home, when very near one of the wagon-bridges they heard groans. The sounds were plain guides, and in a few moments Dr. Chellway was kneeling on the ground beside a man whose head was lying in a pool of blood. As the doctor's lantern lit up the features, Bernardo exclaimed:

"It is Mr. Elliot!"

Hearing his name, perhaps, momentarily aroused the injured man, who spoke thickly.



"It is Mr. Elliot!"

"Don did it!" he said. "I tell you, he did!" Then he seemed asleep.

Over Bernardo's face a look of regretful fear spread itself, and the doctor's well-schooled features showed astonished protest against the statement. His first thought was of Marion, then he remembered Mrs.

McAwtry, and again Marion's grave, fair face rose before his memory.

The doctor remained beside Mr. Elliot, while Bernardo, taking the lantern, walked rapidly away to get help. This he quickly found, for in a small town men and boys seem to learn with astonishing quickness of anything like a disastrous accident.

The injured man was placed on a stretcher and willing hands bore him home. All the way he mumbled of Don and of his horse, and the little crowd accompanying him became familiar with the words: "Don did it! I tell you, Don did it!"

The fact that his horse, a very fine one, was missing, seemed to lay more at Don's door than the injuries to its owner. During all that winter the Overbrook people had been troubled at intervals by cattle thieves. Judge Rayfold had lost a very fine cow, Dr. Chellway another, and Mr. Barman a horse. The disappearance of Mr. Elliot's horse brought afresh to mind these other losses, and Mrs. Elliot was questioned. She said her husband had ridden over to see some of his workmen, leaving immediately after supper. She thought the horse would return to his stable if no one had him.

Several men went to the place where Mr. Elliot had been found and examined the ground. A horse's hoofs had unmistakably torn up the muddy soil, but the rain, again falling, was rapidly effacing all signs.

There was a great deal of talk, of course, and the Elliot family were bitter against Don. Ray listened to his father's repeated accusation with growing anger. "No wonder Don has money to give to his family, and money to keep for himself!" the boy said. "If I was a thief, I could do that. Father has been holding him up to me as an example — and a fine example he is!"

Early the next morning Don was put under arrest, and he would have been confined in jail had it not been for his employer, who was none other than Mr. Barman. That erratic man was in quite a rage over the arrest, and insisted that black could be proved to be white before Don could be proved guilty of stealing or of assault and battery. He declared that he would stand bond for any amount, and through his active influence Don was allowed to go home.

Marion's face was white and sad. Mrs. McAwtry was like a flower beaten to the earth by a storm of wind and rain. She lay on her bed as limp and helpless as such a flower, and Dr. Chellway was with her the most of the day. At her bedside sat her husband, watching her face and often arresting with his own the gaze of her pleading eyes. At such times he would say reassuringly, "Don didn't do it; don't you think it; he didn't do it."

The mother's eyes would glow for a moment, then again begin their ceaseless wandering. Not once did she utter a word.

Bernardo and Dr. Chellway were as firm as Mr. McAwtry or Mr. Barman in the belief that Don was guiltless. But Mr. Elliot's horse had not come back to his stable, and Mr. Elliot still mumbled that Don did it.

All through his life Don's ruling fault had been sulkiness, so that in this crisis he was a puzzle and a sorrow to those who loved him best. His tongue was as silent as a mute's — more so; for he made no sound whatever with it. He had listened to the words of his accusation in dismayed wonder, then a dark, angry expression settled in his eyes, his face became pale and set, and he did what he was told to do — nothing more — never once denying his guilt. When Mr. Barman so indignantly took up his cause, a shadowy smile for one swift moment transfigured his features, though afterward he looked like gloom itself. Mr. Barman told him to go home and wait until the matter could be settled, and he went at once to his room, from which even Marion could not coax him. Every time she went in he was in the same chair by the same window, looking out, his face pale and scowling.

Bernardo's heart was wrung for the boy. The sorrows of many kinds which he had passed through, fitted him to comfort people. He knocked at Don's door late in the afternoon, and, receiving no response, went in, having been warned by Marion what to expect.

Don sat in the same place, the long fingers of one hand toying with his harmonica. The sight was pitiful to sympathetic Bernardo, who knew the boy was not allowed to play on his little instrument in the house. Putting his hand kindly on Don's shoulder, the Spaniard said:

"You have a good deal to make you feel quiet, my boy, but there is only a man here and there who believes you guilty of what is charged to you. You are suffering wrongfully. I have had that to bear, Don, and I know what you are feeling. But I did not have a single one to stand up for me through my troubles. You have many friends, and yet that fact could not make me feel so calm about you were it not for the Best of all Friends, mine and yours alike. He is watching, he is wise. He sent Mr. Anthon to me. Listen, Don, while I talk to him."

Without removing his hand, without in any way changing his position, Bernardo prayed. Such simple, trusting words he uttered! So clearly, so forcefully, so lovingly, were they spoken! They seemed to go sinking, sinking, sinking into Don's heart, and yet to be vibrating about in the air, and the boy felt that somehow the One to whom they were spoken was right there in the room near them.

There was a silence, and then Don surprised even himself, for his lips parted and he said quite naturally:

"Thank you, Bernardo. I have nothing against Mr. Elliot, and I would not have attacked even an enemy in the dark. Neither do I know anything of his horse, nor of any of the — the animals that people are saying I stole."

"I know it, Don. People will be sorry they have talked so about you, and they will think all the more of you when they find out you are guiltless. I must leave you now, but can you do something to please me, my boy? I think your mother has watched all day to see you. Her eyes look about constantly. Won't you go to her room awhile?"

"I can't do that. There would be a scene, and I hate all such!" Don answered.

"You have a right to dislike scenes, Don, but you are a strong young fellow, almost eighteen, and you have no right to hug up your likes and dislikes, selfishly, when it makes a poor, stricken woman dumb with pain," Bernardo said. "Do the thing which will please the One who pleased not himself. Can't you?"

"I'm no Christian," Don said. "Marion is the one to be persuaded as you try to persuade me. But I'll go if mother is really suffering for a sight of me. I can do that much at least."

He arose and put the harmonica in his pocket, and followed Bernardo from the room. At Mrs. McAwtry's door the Spaniard paused and Don entered alone.

Marion and her father and Julia were in the room, but Don saw no face except his mother's. Her eyes were fastened on his the moment he entered. He sat down on the side of the bed in the hush his entrance had caused, and, taking his mother's hand, bent down and whispered to her:

"Mother, I did not do it. Go to sleep. It is coming right somehow," he said.

All saw an instant, peaceful change come over her face, and but a few minutes had passed before she slept quietly.

Don was moving noiselessly toward the door when there sounded in the hall the loud, blustering voice of Judge Rayfold.

"Where's that boy?" he called. "Fine doings, these! He is no more guilty than I am, or than Marion is! I will prove it, too!"

Don stood still. Marion, Julia and Mr.

McAwtry arose quickly and started to the hall. Mrs. McAwtry slept on; the sleep of a brain exhausted, but at rest.

An excited group was at once gathered on the front porch, Dr. Chellway and Bernardo being among the number. The judge had a little satchel in his hand and had evidently just come from a train.

"Now, doc, when did you find Elliot?" he asked. "But hold a moment! I will say for your better understanding that I left town last night on the one o'clock train, and that I have just come back. Now, doc, your answer."

"I think it was just about eleven o'clock," the doctor answered. "For when Bernardo and I left Fale's, it was ten minutes to eleven."

"And how long before that do you think the accident happened to Elliot?"

"Fully an hour, I should say; possibly a little more."

"Well now, listen, all of you!" Judge Rayfold said. "At seven o'clock last evening I heard Don's harp on the street in front of my house. I went to the door and called the boy in, then I told him to sit over in the snug corner and play, while my wife and I enjoyed a game of chess. I had to leave at one, and our game became exciting. Wife and I played on and on, and Don watched us. Then he took my paper case to the train for me, saw me aboard, and went on home, almost two hours after you had found Elliot and put him to bed. Now where is there any case against him? Elliot's own wife says her husband was at the supper table at seven o'clock."

Bernardo's face was shining, and Dr. Chellway was shaking hands all around, laughing through the tears of joy in his eyes.

"Come here, Don!" called the judge, in a loud, commanding tone, stepping to the door.

Don, with a quick glance at his mother, who still slept, came to the porch.

"Ha, my boy!" said the judge, grasping Don's hand. "It's well you saw me beat my wife at chess last night, isn't it? Now do as I tell you. Hold up your head as if you were mayor of the town, take this money, and step briskly to the hotel. I mean the hotel, now — nowhere else. Touch your hat to everybody you meet as you go and come, and let them see you have as clear a conscience as they. Buy me a quarter's worth of note paper, say it is for me, and bring it here. I guess the people down there will see I can prove all I said I would. That's right! I knew there was a lion's heart in you!" he added, as Don stepped back, grasped his hat and started off.

Poor old Mr. McAwtry sank into a chair which Marion placed for him. He was trembling, for the long day had worn on him greatly. Marion's eyes were misty, though she shed no tears.

They watched Don walk with quick, spirited step toward the business part of the town, and saw him take off his hat to several ladies.

Judge Rayfold laughed aloud. "I would give ten thousand dollars for such a boy!" he said. "You needn't tell me it doesn't take grit for Don to do what I told him! I mean to give Barman a dinner for standing by Don."

The conversation was pretty general when the boy came back, the sullen expression gone, his face full of good-will as he handed a small package to Judge Rayfold.

"Did anyone insult you?" the judge asked.

"No, sir; but a good many told me they were glad I am cleared."

Even Mr. McAwtry laughed aloud, and Julia felt hysterical, as the humorous side of the judge's plan dawned on her.

"Well, well, well!" said the judge. "This is a queer world! I have not explained things to a soul but you people here. I simply told a few I could and would prove that the boy is guiltless. Then, a confident step and air, the business-like buying of an article, a care-free touch of the hat, and the

public is full of congratulations to the one under bond to be tried for a grave charge. Guess that what I said spread like ripples on water. Well, I must go home now, and get ready to let my wife beat me at chess to-night. Hope they will catch the real culprit, I'm sure. I want my fine cow, or I want the rogue punished, certain!"

He got up, shook his big body to make his loose clothing fall into position, and started off, though he talked all the way to the street.

Mrs. McAwtry did not rouse at all during the night, and Dr. Chellway gave the family to understand that the symptom was unfavorable. In his heart he was afraid she would not be able to recover from the shock she had sustained, years of suffering having rendered her exceedingly feeble.

Mr. Elliot also passed the night in a stupor. At dawn he called his wife, and seemed surprised when the doctor came to his side. A few sentences sufficed to make him recall the occasion of his injury, and an angry look came to his face as he said bitterly:

"Don did it. Coward!"

"I should like to know what that boy would want to bang you up in this style for," the doctor said, jokingly.

"Boy? Do you think I mean Don McAwtry?" Mr. Elliot asked. "If you do, you are wrong. I verily believe you Overbrook people think you have a copyright on your names. Don McAwtry indeed! Humph!"

He turned his head impatiently, and for the first time the good doctor realized that there might be a Don unknown in Overbrook circles; and, strange to say, the idea made him want to laugh. Yet he was full of the double vindication of his young friend's innocence, and he did not linger longer than necessary at Mr. Elliot's bedside. He scattered the news as he passed to his home, and then he sent Mr. McAwtry a note which made the household glad and thankful.

But between nine and ten o'clock that morning, Dr. Chellway was summoned to come with all speed to see Mrs. McAwtry, and, going at once, he found her dead, lying naturally, her face never before so lovely.

"It was the first shock of the trouble that did the work, Marion," he said, a great compassion on his face, as he leaned over to close the eyes. Then, rising, he added, "This, too, is the work of the one who attacked Elliot. But God knows all. He is love, and all these things shall work together for good to those who love him. You believe it, Marion?"

She bowed her head, but did not speak. Don stood at his father's side, and Julia was lying near her mother's body, sobbing out regrets that she had not been a good daughter.

As for Marion, the Friend who was with her all the time was closest in this hour of trouble, comforting and strengthening her, enabling her to be comfort and strength to the rest of the family. She felt unspeakably thankful that her mother had met death as one lies down to peaceful sleep, having been fully conscious that Don was cleared from all suspicion.

In the days immediately following Marion learned that she had many sincere friends in Overbrook. The people seemed to think that the utmost they could do for the afflicted family was not enough, and that their warmest sympathy was not so much as Marion deserved. Mr. and Mrs. Ripley happened to be on a visit to Mrs. Kirtman at this time, and Marion appreciated especially Mr. Ripley's words of comfort and hope. Yet one of the greatest comforts which came to her was a letter from Juvernia. Letters can be such blessings when love prompts them and God blesses them.

CHAPTER XX.

MRS. VANN LAYS DOWN THE LAW.

JUVERNIA had been so saddened by Ellna's letter telling of the McAwtrys' misfortunes that her mother said she wished they had never heard of "those village people." "There is just one benefit arising from your stay there," she said. "It effectually stopped that nonsense about associating with the curbstone girl who had a bundle to carry. I am glad you have forgotten her, at any rate."

Juvernia said she had not forgotten the girl, but never had seen her since coming back to Baltimore. It sometimes seemed to her that years had passed since the day when she carried Emmie's bundle. She felt like the same Juvernia, yet not the same. In her heart was an even greater pity for the poor and suffering, and her fair hands and sweet voice made this known, as Mrs. Vann was soon to discover.

That lady was one day in her daughter's room during the absence of its young occupant. She put a new magazine on the table, and began idly turning the leaves of a small blank book. Suddenly her hand remained firmly placed, and she read the words:

"Account of the money I owe."

A little flush overspread her face. Could it be possible that Juvernia was borrowing money? "To a crippled man, twenty-five cents," she read, and the faint flush became very decided. "To the newsboy that the horse ran over, a half dollar. To the poor woman who has six children to support, a half dollar. To the preacher, twenty-five cents."

"This is too much!" Mrs. Vann exclaimed. "What under the sun Juvernia borrows money for, I cannot see. And from such people! Actually from some preacher! I wonder who he is? Surely not Mr. Reese!"

She touched a button, and a servant hurried to the room.

"Send Juvernia to me," she said; and the maid knew she was not pleased.

Juvernia came at once, her face bright.

"Juvernia, I want the truth, now — nothing else!" Mrs. Vann said sternly, as if the girl seldom spoke the truth. "How does it happen that you are in debt?" she asked. She was still standing at the table.

"Why, I am not in debt, mamma!" Juvernia said, looking in surprise at her mother. "Who said so?"

"You say it yourself, here in this book, and you owe money to a newsboy, and to a cripple, and even to a preacher!"

The indignation in her mother's voice was so genuine, her bearing so full of haughty surprise, that Juvernia caught her breath in dismay. Then she said, earnestly:

"You don't understand, mother, if you mean my account. You see that is the money I give away."

"That you give away? Why, you say plainly it is the money you owe."

This time the color flamed into Juvernia's face. "Perhaps 'owe' is not the word I ought to use," she answered. "I know I do not owe it in the way you think I do. I do not borrow money from those people — the poor ones, and the preacher. I just give them some of my very own money, the money father gives me to spend as I please."

"Then how did you come to use the word 'owe'?" asked Mrs. Vann. She seated herself and motioned Juvernia to a chair. "I must understand this," she went one. "You say now that you do not think you should have used the word 'owe.' Before you came to that conclusion, to whom did you think you owed it?"

"To God," said Juvernia, softly. She was not looking at her mother, and so did not see the look of surprise on her face.

"Owed it to God! A most remarkable statement!" said Mrs. Vann, haughtily.

"You see, mother," Juvernia continued, looking up, "I heard of a man who thought it right for every Christian to give God at

least one-tenth of his money. He himself did it. He used the word 'owe,' and said every one owes a tenth to God. But, somehow, I did not quite like the word, and I do not like to put such a limit on what I give, for all I have God gives me."

"Juvernia, you almost make me frantic!" exclaimed Mrs. Vann. "If you had fifty cents to earn, you would understand its value. Your father gives enough for all of us, I am sure. I venture anything that that most exalted Miss Marion McAwtry put all these notions in your head. You are too young to originate them."

Juvernia had learned long before that her mother had taken a violent dislike to Marion, so she said nothing.

"Your silence is all the confirmation I want," Mrs. Vann said. "Now listen! Since you find it so easy to be a Lady Bountiful, I lay down this law: When you find, according to your most ingenious method, that you have a dime you owe, you are not to give the dime up until you earn another. The same law applies to any sum whatever — a quarter, fifty cents, any amount. Do you understand?"

Pained and confused, Juvernia said she did, then added timidly, "I do not know how to earn money, mother. But even if I could earn a dime, what would I do with it? Would you be willing for me to give it along with the other dime?"

"Oh, certainly!" her mother answered, a sneer in her voice. "I am perfectly willing for you to give away the tenth of all the money that is furnished you, provided you earn as much as the tenth — which, also, you are welcome to give away."

The smile that accompanied these words was not good to see. It passed away, though, as the lady sat there lost in thought. Her child's course of action disturbed her. She tried to remember a single instance of disobedience since Juvernia had been forbidden to join the church, and she could not do it; but she did remember a good many times when Juvernia had behaved well under provocation. At last she decided that there was a strong tendency towards being too good in the girl, and she was glad the opportunity had arisen to discuss this subject. Looking up brightly, she said:

"Well, now that I have settled this question, I will tell you what I came here to say. I am going to give you a party."

Juvernia sprang up, looking all animation. "Oh, mother, how nice that will be!" she exclaimed. "When will it be?"

Mrs. Vann smiled. "I am glad you have no foolish ideas about the propriety of giving or not giving a party," she said. "I have decided to issue the invitations for next Wednesday evening; a week from to-morrow, I mean. You know Sadie Bell is coming on Saturday, and the party will help entertain her."

"Indeed it will! And, mother, I wish you would let me write and ask Della Kirtman to come. She never has a pleasure so great as a visit to a city, and she was so kind to me last summer. Please let me invite her."

The lady thought for several minutes before she answered this plea. She finally decided that it would be an excellent opportunity to make her daughter feel the difference between a girl in her own sphere and a girl in Della Kirtman's. Possibly Juvernia might be so mortified at Della's out-of-date clothes and manners that it would go far to wean her from all the Overbrook people. So she looked up and said Della might be invited.

Juvernia was jubilant, and when her father heard about it he said:

"And you can tell Della, for me, that if she will come I will send her a railroad ticket here and back. I would like to do something to show my appreciation of her kindness to my Blondy Cap last summer."

"Then she'll come, I know, if her mother will let her accept the tickets," Juvernia said; and she went to write her invitation at once.

CHAPTER XXI.

DISAPPOINTMENT AND JOY.

MY readers can imagine the stir Juvernia's letter caused in the Kirtman home. Della, more than any one else, hesitated about accepting the invitation, and Terry was indignant.

"You've got a whole lot of notions above you!" he said. "I'm sure you are good-looking enough to go to Baltimore, if you would wash your face in buttermilk and get rid of the freckles. If you are hesitating on account of your clothes, I am ashamed to have you for a sister. They won't expect you to dress as fine as Juvernia does. You won't be likely to get another such chance to see Baltimore and Juvernia."

Mrs. Kirtman left the decision wholly with her daughter, and after many spirited discussions with Terry, Della decided to go. Then began the preparations for the visit. The time was short, as Juvernia insisted that Della should be there for the party. But Marion came to the rescue and made the pretty white dress Mr. Ripley had brought his niece a month or two before, and which no one had thought she would need until the next year.

The days passed rapidly, and when everything was ready to be packed, Della had another pleasant surprise. Max Anthon came racing up the drive with his hat in one hand and his handkerchief waving in the other. Terry and Della met him on the steps, and when he could get breath enough he explained that he, too, was going to Baltimore.

"It is a year of wonders!" he exclaimed. "The doctor is going to some gathering of medical men, and is going to take me to visit the son of his friend!"

"Isn't it fine that you will be there when I am!" Della asked. "You must come to see Juvernia and me every day, Max."

"I'll feel like it, I know," the boy answered, "for it isn't delightful to be among strangers, as I know by sad experience. I guess we will meet at Druid Hill Park, Della. Aren't you anxious to see it?"

At last Della's trunk was ready even to the locking of it, and only one night intervened between her and her longed-for trip to Baltimore. The visit had gained in fascination as preparations for it advanced, and to-night Della was almost too eager and excited to think of going to bed.

"Everything is in readiness for your start in the morning, and I will wake you early," her mother said. "I must go now and see if Julian is asleep. He does not seem well."

When she reached the little boy's bed, she found him burning with fever, and scarcely to be roused to a sensible response to any of her questions.

Terry went at once for Dr. Chellway, and the rest of the family sat up to await his verdict.

Examining Julian very carefully, and asking what seemed an unconscionable number of questions, Dr. Chellway said it would be necessary for him to go to the drug store and make up a prescription. He looked unusually sober, and Mrs. Kirtman felt a frightened wonder when he asked Terry to go ahead and wait for him at the lawn bridge. Terry went at once, and the doctor turned to Mrs. Kirtman with the words:

"Della must not go to Baltimore. I am sorry for her sake, but sorrier for Julian's. He has scarlet fever."

"Oh, doctor!" was the alarmed exclamation which the frightened girls heard.

"Julian must be very sick," Elina said, and her soft eyes sought Della's bright brown ones, then looked elsewhere quickly. The thought had come to each that if the boy were very sick, none of the family ought to leave home, especially on a visit of pleasure.

To give up the trip within a few hours of the time to start, to miss seeing beautiful

Baltimore, the Peabody Institute, the Monument, the lovely park, to forego the steamer ride, the delightful drives, the elegant ease of Juvernia's home, and to miss being with Juvernia herself, were darts that cut deep into Della's heart, making her breath come in queer snatches. Yet to leave Julian when he was ill could not be thought of for a moment. She must stay at home.

Turning her face from Elina's, she looked at her waiting trunk and tried to calm her feelings before her mother should come. But Mrs. Kirtman did not come. She remained in Julian's room, and finally Elina went to her. Della did not stir.

"If I have to stay at home," she was telling herself, "I ought to propose it and do it in a spirit of which I shall never be ashamed. Mother says a sacrifice is not beautiful any other way, nor helpful either. It seems hard that Julian had to get sick just at this time. I wonder why he couldn't have waited until I got off, anyway — or better, why he couldn't have been sick before I thought about going to see Juvernia? But it's all nonsense wondering about anything! Oh, dear! I shall cry like a baby if I have to stay; but nobody else shall know it. I will be brave before mother, and I will cry after Elina goes to sleep. Oh, dear me! there comes mother now, and the tears are fairly racing into my eyes!"

She controlled the tears as best she could and turned eagerly to her mother.

"What is it, mother? Is Julian very sick?" she asked.

"Yes, Della, very sick indeed," said Mrs. Kirtman, sitting on the side of the bed by her daughter. Her voice was sad, and Della felt more than before that the sacrifice ought to be made and willingly made. As she was thinking this, her mother asked, "If he is no better by morning, do you think you ought to go, Della?"

"Not for the world, mother!" was the brave reply, the bravery being more in the tone than in the extravagant words. "I could not enjoy even Baltimore and Juvernia if I should leave any of you sick. What is the matter with Julian?"

"You make me proud and glad, little daughter," were the fond words which made the young heart glow. "But you must not think I don't understand what this means to you. And now, listen. You could not have gone, in any case, for Julian has scarlet fever. I shrank from dashing your hopes all of a sudden, and was feeling my way when I first spoke to you. It makes me thankful to find you so brave." The mother had drawn Della to her, and tenderly soothed the burst of tears which followed her words.

"Don't think I am vexed because I can't go, mother. The tears would not have come if you had not praised me."

Mrs. Kirtman laughed softly. She could not stay any longer away from Julian, though, for Elina was calling her even then. She said a few loving words and went away.

The next day Mr. Vann received a message which gave all his family the keenest regret, though each one felt it for a different reason. Preparations for the party helped wonderfully to make the girls forget their disappointment, and Juvernia filled every spare moment with graphic descriptions of Della and of each of the Kirtman family. Sadie Bell listened in evident delight, and grew intensely interested in the cave episode, wondering that she had never before heard of the little town among the hills.

The party was a great success, though Mrs. Vann saw no little girl in out-of-date garments flitting here and there by the side of the stylishly-dressed Sadie Bell.

The next day a letter came from Marion to Juvernia, written for Della, who was not allowed to write. She had sent by Dr. Chellway to ask Marion to keep Juvernia posted in regard to Julian.

"Of course," wrote Marion, "the family are cut off from communication with the town, except through the doctor. It is the first case of scarlet fever there has ever been

in Overbrook, and Dr. Chellway thinks Julian must have contracted it when he carried a dipper of water to a crying child in a traveling wagon. You know how quick Julian is to carry help wherever he sees a need. The poor little fellow is very ill. The doctor says Della has been very brave and helpful. Max was sent to Bernardo (as we all call him when he is not present) the very night the doctor discovered what Julian's ailment was. The two boys had not been together for about a week, as Julian had staid closely at home, so we hope the disease will not spread."

After the letter, Marion sent a card every few days, and each was hopeful. Then came one saying that all danger was over, and that no other case had developed. Sadie Bell and Mrs. Vann laughed at Juvernia's enthusiastic joy over the news that Julian was on the road to a safe recovery. But she told them that if only they knew Julian they, too, would rejoice.

CHAPTER XXII.

MRS. VANN MAKES A DISCOVERY.

THE medical convention was held, but Dr. Chellway was not in Baltimore. This was another disappointment for Juvernia, for she expected much pleasure in seeing Max.

The days were somewhat dull after Sadie Bell went home, and Juvernia talked more than ever about Overbrook. One afternoon, sitting near her mother on the vine-shaded side piazza, she said:

"I do hope Max did not catch that fever. It would almost kill Bernardo if he should have to give Max up."

Mrs. Vann made no answer. She was busy with some intricate fancy-work. But in a few moments she said:

"Juvernia, see if that carriage stopped at the curb."

Juvernia leaned forward to see, then gave a spring and was gone, a flash of blue and yellow as to dress and hair.

"Well! Is the child bewitched?" Mrs. Vann said, half rising. "I shall never be able to teach her repose — never!"

She stepped to the end of the veranda and saw Juvernia standing on the walk beside a strange boy, her face all animation as it was upturned to a gentleman seated in the carriage.

"That is the Jennings carriage," Mrs. Vann said. "I wonder who the strangers are? No use wondering, though. Juvernia knows many a person I don't know, and never shall. But I believe Mrs. Jennings is in the carriage."

She sat down then, for the strange boy and Juvernia were advancing to the house. They came to where the lady sat, and she was a little taken aback when Juvernia said:

"Mother, I am delighted to introduce Max Anthon to you. Max, my mother."

"Dear me! That cattle-ranch boy!" was Mrs. Vann's inward comment. But she responded with graceful courtesy to the boy's greeting, at the same time scanning his attire a little more closely than was necessary. She saw no fault, however, for Dr. Chellway and his wife knew what was correct in dress about as well as Mrs. Vann.

"Just think, mother!" Juvernia said, "our Dr. Jennings is the dear friend of Dr. Chellway. Olivia and her mother are in the carriage, and they want me to go driving with them. May I?"

Mrs. Vann could not have found an excuse if she had wanted one, for the "rosy doctor" of her memory and the boy of the cattle-ranch were visiting the great Dr. Jennings!

After that Max came almost every day to see Juvernia, sometimes alone, sometimes with Gus or Olivia Jennings. Mrs. Vann watched him closely, seeing with inward wonder that he was as much at ease

in what she called "polite society" as any of the Baltimore youths. By and by he even won her admiration, so that Olivia told him he had accomplished a wonder.

One afternoon Juvernia and Max were talking about Bernardo and his belief in the Christian religion, Mrs. Vann sat near, reading, or pretending to read. She listened with amused interest, for the subject of which the two young people spoke had its fascination for her. She really enjoyed the graphic description of the baptism of the Spaniard and his reception into church membership. Then she heard Max say:

"Such another man about giving, you never did see! He is afraid he will miss some chance to help others. I don't see how he lives. Yet Dr. Chellway says he is going to prosper. And it does look like it, for those grapevines he set out last year are the admiration of the town—they are splendid!"

A little laugh which came almost unawares from Mrs. Vann's lips startled her as well as the young people, and she said, humbly for her:

"You will have to excuse me, Max. Your Spaniard is like a whiff of fresh air to me. He is a curiosity, too. Does he love you as much as ever?"

"Oh, yes," Max replied. "You see he loves me for father's sake."

"And not at all for yours; yes, I see," the lady said mischievously, fingering a beautiful cross fastened to her watch chain.

Max looked at the trinket and a surprised expression crossed his face. He half arose, and then looked considerably abashed as he sat down again. He glanced at Mrs. Vann, and said apologetically:

"I was surprised because of that cross on your chain. It is like one Bernardo has."

"That is scarcely possible, I should think," Mrs. Vann said, a mixture of haughtiness and sadness in her tone.

"I believe there is a difference," Max was glad to say. "There is a tiny heart of diamonds on Bernardo's cross."

The color left Mrs. Vann's face at that and she gave the boy a penetrating look.

"The cross belonged to father."—See page 82.

She settled back in her chair, and asked Juvernia for a fan, saying she felt faint. This of course attracted the instant attention of the young people. Juvernia stood by her mother's chair and fanned her, asking if she would not better lie down.

"No, oh, no; it will pass in a moment!" Mrs. Vann said.

And she did rally very quickly. Max brought some ice-water, which revived her almost at once. But when he was again seated, having determined to say no more about the two crosses, Mrs. Vann astonished him by saying:

"I hope you will not think I am unduly curious, Max, but I wish you would give me as close a description as you can of the cross you say your friend has."

"Why, certainly," the boy said. "I think it is just like yours, after all, for I see that both of them have a heart of diamonds."

"And has the man owned it ever since your father first befriended him? I thought you said he was once little more than a beggar."

A pained look was on Max's face as he replied:

"Bernardo was very poor when we found him. But as to the cross, he does not really own it, for it is to be mine when I am of age. You see it belonged to father."

At these words Mrs. Vann fell back with closed eyes, and Juvernia screamed:

"Oh, Max! Something dreadful is the matter! Run, Max! Call Cynthy; call everybody!"

Mrs. Vann had really fainted this time, and the excitement was great. Cynthy and the other servants carried her to bed, and Max telephoned for Mr. Vann and Dr. Jennings. Then he sat down alone, and waited, wondering if Juvernia's mother fainted often, or if the crosses had anything to do with this attack.

He could get no word with Juvernia, for she was with her mother.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE HERO OF THE WHEELS.

WHEN Mr. Vann reached home he found his wife sitting at a window in her room, full of a half-shamed remorse at having created such a panic in the household. She even joked with Dr. Jennings about fainting for the first time in her life, and so relieved Juvernia that the girl ran away to find Max.

Alone with her husband, Mrs. Vann's levity departed, and she said with excitement:

"Randolph, that boy down yonder is my nephew, I do firmly believe!"

"Your — why, how do you make that out?" Mr. Vann asked, greatly puzzled.

Then the lady gave him an account of the conversation about the crosses. "And you know, Mr. Vann," she said, "there can scarcely be more than two such crosses in the United States, considering where they came from originally. You remember that a Russian prince gave them to my grandfather, who had saved the lives of two of the prince's children. Father fell heir to the crosses, and then he gave them to brother and me. Do you not see that Max's father must be my brother?"

"It does seem possible; and you remember the Spaniard said he saw a striking likeness in Juvernia to the gentleman you mention. But you have forgotten that he was an Anthon, and that your family name is Anthony," Mr. Vann said thoughtfully.

"In my mind that makes not the slightest difference," the lady said. "Brother vowed we should never even hear of him again, and he might have dropped the 'y' from his name just to mislead us. I feel sure the man who died out on that horrid cattle-ranch was Tom. Just think of it, Randolph! It is incredible, and he so refined in his tastes!"

"We must not jump at conclusions in this matter, Ophelia," said Mr. Vann. "I think we would better keep our surmises to ourselves until we can see our way more clearly. If you would like, I will go over to Overbrook at my first opportunity and have a talk with the Spaniard, and also see his cross."

"That is the best plan, decidedly," Mrs. Vann said, relief in her voice. And so they dismissed the subject.

Mrs. Vann did not leave her room again that afternoon, but spent the time in dreaming over the incidents of her life before her brother had left home. He had made wild associates, and the second time he came home intoxicated his father had refused him admittance. He went away vowing he would never return. And he never did, his conduct being his mother's death-blow, if not his father's also.

Mrs. Vann was called a Christian, but she sat in her room that day and suffered without one thought of the Friend who loved her with a great compassion. She had never in her life realized God's ability to comfort a human heart, his willingness to be with his children. Indeed, she knew nothing about his love and cared nothing about it. She belonged to the church because it was eminently respectable to belong there, but she was without life's truest joy and zest.

In those days Juvernia was sorely troubled concerning the matter of her "account"—the money she loved to give to good causes. It was exactly as it had been when her mother ordered it discontinued until she earned money. Not one cent had she given away since, though it seemed to the girl that poverty-stricken people in greater numbers than ever, looked pleadingly at her, and the various church collections caused her frequent pain. She had proposed a half dozen ways of earning money, but all had been scoffed at by her mother. One way was prohibited because Mrs. Vann said she wanted no "red-handed" daughter; another, because the public would not understand it, and so on. Mr. Vann cudgeled his brain to find a way to help Juvernia, but in vain. He felt a real respect for her ideas of religion. He perceived how it pained her to see distress and not relieve it, to wish to help the church and not be able to do so. He also knew his daughter would not disobey her mother. So, whenever he gave to good causes at all, he gave magnificently, telling his heart that half of it was for Juvernia. When he could he said a word for the girl to her mother, and these words did more good than the proud lady allowed him to see.

One day he said to himself: "I wish Ophelia was a true Christian; then I'd be one." Juvernia's light was shining, and her big-hearted but careless father was seeing it to his edification.

One afternoon Mr. Vann stood in his office door and saw the Jennings boy and his sister spin by on their wheels, Juvernia and Max following.

"None of them has the grace of that queerly-named daughter of yours, Vann," his partner said, smiling. "Her very head has a tilt that is fascinating, and she has won about half the people in town by smiling and nodding to them. Can't wonder; some of them get few enough nods and smiles, goodness knows!"

Mr. Vann sighed. He was wondering if Juvernia would ever outgrow her sweet naturalness, and become chary of her smiles among the people who received few of them.

It was perhaps an hour later that two newsboys rushed breathless into the office. Each tried to speak first, and neither could be understood. Mr. Burkart grasped one of the youngsters by the shoulders and said emphatically: "Hush, can't you! Now, you other boy, tell your news!"

"'Taint no news!" the boy said bluntly. "We want Mr. Vann to know as how his young lady has been hurt, and they have carried her home. It was mad horses and

bicycles, sir. They would 'a' tramped her to death before me and Pete could 'a' got to her, if it hadn't been fur a boy that was a-ridin' with her. He's fine, sir! He's worth all! He—"

Mr. Vann sprang up and took his hat. "Stay here and tell these gentlemen about it," he said. "And, you boy there, come with me to the car, and tell me all you know about the affair."

The boy who had been silenced felt magnificently rewarded as he walked out of the office at Mr. Vann's side, his tongue full of ready words.

"You see, sir," he said, "the wheels were in their rightful track, a good many of 'em, and us fellows was watching. But them fiery new horses at Black's stable was out, folks a-drivin' behind 'em. They went clean mad at a goat wagon, and dashed in so many ways it was hard to rightly see 'em. They was almost onto your young lady when that boy give her wheel a shove that turned it clean over but put her out of the way. But to do it, he had rushed right where she was, and the horses was on him, we thought. Then, sir, we saw a sight! That boy kind o' leaped up off his tumbling wheel, and locked his arms around a horse's neck, and then his feet, too, and he hung there for all the world like a monkey, sir. The people cheered, for sure, and the horses stopped enough for folks to hold 'em. The ladies and gents got to the ground as prompt as they could, and the driver was a-holdin' the boy in his arms the last I see of him. There was a great crowd and some one said he had hurt his back. Folks packed around the young lady, too, sir—you may believe that! She wasn't much hurt; you needn't think she was, and feel any great ways bad. When the boy pushed her out of the way, she threw out her arm to steady the fall, and I think maybe it got broke. But that's nothing to being dead, sir!"

Mr. Vann drank in every word, his big heart warming when the waif at his side attempted to ease his fears. He knew the young hero of the wheels and horses must be Max, and he felt anxious about the boy, knowing how serious is an injury to the back. He handed the lad at his side a dollar as the car approached, but the offering was declined.

"Didn't tell you fur money," said the newsboy. "Me and Pete heard her say to go fur father, and we done it fur her sake, sir. We fellers was glad to do something fur her. You see, she likes us, and speaks to us same as to rich folks."

The dollar was dropped back into his pocket, and Mr. Vann said, gravely and heartily, "I am much obliged to you, my boy." Then he stepped aboard the car and was carried rapidly homeward.

He found his wife in the hall weeping. Juvernia was as white as the dead, she said, and Mr. Vann must go at once to her, that the broken bone might be set. She herself had refused to be present, and had also insisted that Dr. Jennings should wait until her husband could be there.

The injury was to the right lower arm only, one bone being broken. The few bruises on the girl's body did not amount to much, and the doctor left her laughing when he hurried home to see after his young guest. Afterward he used some hard medical term in telling Mr. Vann about the particular muscles Max had strained. He said that perfect rest for perhaps two weeks would be necessary in order to restore him.

The accident happened on the eve of Dr. Chellway's departure for home, and he found difficulty in deciding what to do. He did not like to leave Max, but he himself was obliged to go to Overbrook. He sent his wife a message to prevent any fright from newspaper accounts, and the next day was still debating what he should do, when a carriage drove up and Bernardo stepped out. Both the doctors hurried forth to welcome him, for they saw at once the solution to Dr. Chellway's problem. The Spaniard's

dark eyes flashed as Max's bravery and presence of mind were detailed to him. He said he had brought his trunk, and would stay with the boy as long as a nurse was needed, then take him safely home.

The Vanns heard of Bernardo's arrival with peculiar pleasure, and Mrs. Vann at once besieged her husband to talk with him about Mr. Anthon and the ruby cross. This was easier to suggest than to accomplish, as the Vanns found out. Bernardo had come to Baltimore to care for Max Anthon, not to see strangers, and he lived in the boy's room.

In the meantime Juvernia was suffering much. The mother-love in Mrs. Vann almost conquered the love of the world when she saw, day by day, the winning patience with which her daughter bore the pain of the knitting bone. As time went on she realized a little the girl's love for and interest in the poor and the unfortunate. Daily the butler declared that people of all ages and stations and of several different nationalities came to inquire how the young lady was getting along. Cynthy was exceedingly proud of this, and said that if she had kept account of the times folks with big, sorrowful eyes came there to ask about Blondy Cap, it would take a book to hold the numbers. "But, sho!" she would add; "they can't help it, nor can't help lovin' her, no more than the hot trees can help lovin' the shower that cools 'em; she's that pleasant!"

All this touched Mrs. Vann, and one day when the agony of the knitting bone was making Juvernia's brow moist, she asked with great tenderness if there was nothing at all she could do to ease the pain.

"Nothing, I think, mother," was the answer, as the girl lay with closed eyes.

There was an evident effort on the lady's part, but she said:

"Suppose I tell you I am going to let you open up that queer account of yours again; will that make the pain easier to bear?"

She was never quite sure whether it was a smile or a groan that parted the lips of the sufferer. But another moment passed and Juvernia said:

"That will make everything easier to bear — everything."

"Then you may open it whenever you want to," was the graciously-given response; and the girl was so happy that her face was radiant.

Mr. Vann went about with a heavy heart during those days, for Juvernia's pain was a sore trial to him. He even imagined that some kind of fever was setting in and that she would surely die because he loved her too much.

Dr. Jennings saw the difference between him and the faithful Bernardo one day when he laughingly accused the Spaniard of loving Max too much.

"That is impossible, so long as I love God infinitely more," Bernardo said gravely.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE FINDING OF MALCOLM RIPLEY.

HUMAN love, powerful as it is, cannot avert suffering, and all Bernardo's tender care did not prevent changes for the worse in Max. About the time when Juvernia reached the end of real suffering with her broken arm, Max became so much worse that Dr. Chellway was summoned.

Mr. Vann had not been able to have a private talk with Bernardo, and his wife was considerably excited when Max grew worse. She declared that if he should die without her knowing whether or not he were her brother's son, it would kill her. She went to Dr. Jennings' home and requested a few minutes' private talk with the Spaniard. Bernardo's amazement was almost amusing when he received the summons, and he said a few minutes was all the

time he could give. Leaving Dr. Chellway to watch Max, he descended to the parlor.

Mrs. Vann was awed by the questioning look in his keen black eyes, and she went at once to the heart of her mission. Bernardo's promised few minutes lengthened to almost an hour as he and Mrs. Vann talked together of Mr. Anthon and of Mr. Anthony. But there was a strange light in the Spaniard's eyes, and he produced the ruby cross without hesitation, saying it had been given him in charge by Mr. Anthon for his son Max.

The lady held the trinket but a moment. There could be no doubt about it — the cross had been her brother's, and Mr. Anthon and Mr. Anthony were one and the same, and Max was her nephew, she declared, and begged Bernardo to let her go to him and stay with him.

Bernardo's face darkened. "Madam, it would be the death of the boy," he said. "A stranger about him at this time would be disastrous."

Then he bowed his head in deep thought. He recalled the time when Dr. Chellway had insisted that Max was the son of Mr. Ripley. He had objected seriously to believing that. He remembered how strikingly like his old friend was Juvernia Vann. He believed her to be the niece of Mr. Anthon, and his heart warmed towards the woman before him — the sister of that kind old friend who had saved him from the miseries of his early life. Looking up with such a softened expression that Mrs. Vann was surprised, the Spaniard said:

"I will speak to the physicians, madam; we must abide by what they say."

The next moment the lady was alone, though not for long. Dr. Chellway came in and greeted her pleasantly. She repeated to him her convictions about Max, and was surprised to see no response whatever on the kind face. Bernardo had told the doctor in a sentence or two the business on which Mrs. Vann had called, and now he said:

"In order to relieve your mind, madam, I will say that I have a strong conviction that the boy was only the adopted son of Tom Anthony, who, I understand, was your brother."

"Did you ever know Tom Anthony?" Mrs. Vann asked, for the first time remembering that Dr. Chellway was Max's guardian.

"He and I were inseparable during our college days," the doctor answered.

At once Mrs. Vann recalled glowing confidences about "dear old Jack," "the best friend a fellow ever had," and so on. And this doctor was her own brother's devoted friend! She looked at him so long and so steadily that the doctor grew rosier than ever, and felt almost awkward when the lady said with great cordiality:

"I realize now who you are. Why, I have heard Tom talk of you a hundred times! I do thank you, doctor, for your kindness to him in those days. I have never heard a single word from him since he left home."

"I have a letter you shall read," Dr. Chellway said, recovering himself. Then he explained that through a natural mistake made by a stranger, her brother's name had been called Anthon, and he, willing to thus hide his identity, had allowed it to pass, and so had become known in his part of the country as Mr. Anthon.

"The sin, for sin I believe it was," continued Dr. Chellway, "caused him serious trouble, explained in the letter I hope to some day show you. For instance, the Spaniard thinks his old friend's name was Anthon, and the boy goes by that name. I have not corrected it, because I had no authority to do so. But I do not believe Tom would have allowed his son to bear a false name, and this adds conviction to conviction. I am convinced the boy was his adopted son and that the matter will all be explained when he is of age. I have good cause to believe this."

Mrs. Vann listened with the most rapt at-

tention. Her heart inclined her to believe as the doctor did; but the possibility of mistake made her afraid. If the boy should die, and then it were to be discovered that he was indeed her brother's own son, she would be inconsolable because she had not nursed him.

Dr. Chellway seemed to divine her feelings, for he said, "I will give you my convictions in regard to Max. I do it in confidence, however, for it is necessary that the matter be kept quiet. I believe he is Malcolm Ripley."

He went on to relate the incidents of the well-known story concerning the Ripleys, and Mrs. Vann lost no word. She heard convincing proof of the power that God's love has over human hearts, hearts as frail by nature as hers. She was filled with wonder. But she threw off every feeling except her selfish wishes, and exclaimed vehemently:

"Is there no way to decide the thing now? I must know, doctor! I cannot bear this doubt!"

At that moment a messenger called urgently for Dr. Chellway to return to Max, and he excused himself without answering Mrs. Vann's question.

"I sent for you," Bernardo said as the doctor entered the sick room, "because I believe Max is dying, though Dr. Jennings says not. See him!"

Max was in a stupor, which certainly seemed like death. The doctor took one of the sick boy's hands in his own and said:

"I am not the man to deceive you, old friend. Nor is Dr. Jennings. Our boy is very low. He may die; yet he is not now dying. When he rouses from this stupor he may pass away from us in a twinkling, or he may brighten and live. His strong constitution is our hope.

"God's will ever contents me," said Bernardo reverently, after a silence in which he seemed to be struggling with his own feelings. "Only pray for my boy!"

The report that Max was dying had gotten abroad in the house, and Mrs. Vann was completely unnerved. She sent for Dr. Chellway, and wept and begged by turns. She wanted the Ripleys telegraphed for, that they might see the boy and judge for themselves.

The doctor was bewildered. He related circumstances to Bernardo, just as they were, and was amazed at the Spaniard.

"I believe," he replied, "that the lady is the sister of Max's father. I can understand how a wild, wicked man could drop a letter from his name to hide his identity, but this is all nonsense about the Ripleys! I regret that you mentioned it to the lady."

"But, my friend, truth is truth; and a man cannot go against his conscience without hurt to his soul. There is one way, Bernardo, to settle the question."

"You mean the box," the Spaniard said. "But if he dies, what will it matter about the box, one way or another?" he muttered to himself. "What would Mr. Anthon say if he could advise me? He never thought the boy might die. But he seems almost gone even now. Poor young life!"

Touched at the man's grief and bewilderment, Dr. Chellway quietly left the room. But not too quietly for notice. Bernardo knew he was alone, and he knelt by the bed. Mortal ear did not hear his words; the ear of the Most High did hear. And when Bernardo arose his face showed the calmness of his trusting heart. He looked down at Max a moment, then he touched a button and asked the servant who answered the bell to send Dr. Jennings to the room, also Dr. Chellway.

The doctors came with promptness.

"Dr. Jennings," Bernardo said, "I want to ask that you will stay here a few moments while I go with Dr. Chellway to my room. I wish to find proof, if possible, of Max's parentage."

"I will do so with the sincerest pleasure," the kind host responded. "Stay as long as

you will, and I shall be right here all the time."

Great surprise, but real joy, was on Dr. Chellway's face. He was silent as he turned and went with the Spaniard to his room, fearing to say the wrong word.

When the two were alone together, Bernardo turned to Dr. Chellway and said:

"I feel that it is not wrong, in view of possible death, to open the box in my care. But I do it on condition that the nature of the contents, if not bearing on his identity, shall be sacredly kept secret by you."

"You may rely upon me," the doctor said.

The trunk was opened, and once more the beautiful box was removed. Unlocking it with a small key he took from his watch chain, Bernardo lifted the lid, and Dr. Chellway smiled, as he saw, pinned to a package, a letter bearing the address: "To my adopted son, Max." Bernardo started as he took in the meaning of the words. Then he withdrew the pin, opened the letter, and read as follows:

"My dear Boy:—If you ever read this, I shall be dead, for, otherwise, my lips shall unfold to you the contents of the letter. I think you could not have been more than four months old when I took you to be my own. And now, when you are twelve years of age, you are as dear to me as an own child could be. I know you will be full of sorrow to learn that I am unable to tell you your own name. I have sought for it in vain. I was passing through San Francisco on a business trip, years ago, when I heard by merest accident of a very pitiful death at a hospital. The man who died was a Chinese servant. He had been found on the street unconscious, and had a white baby with him. Dying, he left the baby unknown and unclaimed. You are that baby, for I adopted you. And I have never regretted the step. You have been sunshine in my gloomy life, and your innocent love has turned my heart to God. In the package to which I shall pin this letter you will find the garments you wore when I took you from the hospital. They are marked 'M. R.,' and their quality and fashioning prove that you sprung from refined parentage. Because of the 'M' I called you Max. My life history is almost as sad as yours, and my real name is Thomas Gaines Anthony. If—"

But suddenly Bernardo closed the pages, saying: "We have read all we have a right to know. I now believe with you that the son of Mr. Ripley is lying at the point of death. I am willing for you to call his parents to him. Mr. Anthony would be glad to have them come, I feel sure."

As the Spaniard spoke he was pinning the letter in its old place, and Dr. Chellway watched him replace the package, lock the box and put it back in the trunk.

"You are a true friend, Bernardo Barez," he said. "I thank you for the trust you have reposed in me as the boy's guardian, and I pray God to spare the young life so dear to you."

"When the Ripleys come," Bernardo said, "I will show them the contents of the package. That will make the thing certain, I suppose. If Max lives, he alone shall examine the whole contents of the box. And now I will go to him, putting the affair in your charge. Tell Mrs. Vann she may rest content."

There was a tense tone in his voice, and his face was sad. Bernardo realized that in death or in life Max would probably be removed far from him. He felt that he was one set apart, as regarded human hearts. Yet God was his; the loving, tender, compassionate Christ would be with him ever and always. That was enough to satisfy the soul, and a restful calm was on his face as he once more entered Max's room.

The news which Dr. Chellway bore to the Jennings family and to Mrs. Vann excited them greatly, and all were anxious that a dispatch be sent at once to Mr. Ripley. This was done, and then Mrs. Vann asked a dozen or more questions about the box and the letter.

Dr. Chellway smiled, despite his anxiety, as he said:

"Mrs. Vann, I am perfectly safe in affirming that unless Max dies, you need not expect to see the box or the letter, or to find out anything concerning either. Bernardo

has very strict notions of honor and honesty, and that box and its contents are in his care. We will simply have to do as he thinks is right. I myself believe that he is guided by God and will not do wrong. Bernardo Barez has the most child-like faith in God of anybody I ever saw."

Mrs. Vann looked out of the window. She did not want to hear about God just then. It made her feel uneasy concerning the way she had treated Juvernia's love for him.

The next day the Ripleys arrived, their hearts a-quiver with varied emotions.

CHAPTER XXV.

A BEAUTIFUL UNFOLDING.

THE Jennings family were charmed with the Ripleys, and all, down to the lowest servant about the place, felt keen interest in the development of the case concerning them and their supposed son.

Dr. Jennings was astonished at the calmness and yet the eager interest with which Mrs. Ripley discussed affairs. "Why, man," he said to Dr. Chellway, "she is a little, delicate-looking woman, with the heart of a—"

"True Christian!" Dr. Chellway said, smiling. "She knows what it is to trust her powerful Lord. That explains it all."

"It is an influence I don't understand," Dr. Jennings said. "I never am with you, doc, that you do not make me half in love with your religious views. I think I shall look into the matter for myself. I'd like to possess a knowledge that can keep a timid woman so peaceful at such a trying time as this."

"Every one is kept in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on God," was the response. "And you know, Jennings, you are forever on my heart."

Dr. Jennings turned away a little abruptly, and in a few moments both men were sent for to go to Max.

The boy was conscious, and appeared to recognize Dr. Chellway, but he dropped asleep almost immediately, and there seemed little change for the better.

Bernardo left the physicians in charge while he went to carry the package to Mrs. Ripley. Reaching the room where the lady and her husband awaited him, he greeted them pleasantly, and gave to Mrs. Ripley the package to which the letter had been pinned.

The three looked on with almost breathless anxiety as the cord was untied and the papers folded back. Then they saw a suit of long baby-clothes and a pair of pink silk socks. Mrs. Ripley unfolded the dainty garments, and even Bernardo felt his eyes grow misty when she said:

"I myself made these little garments, and my baby wore them. Harmon, God is good. He has given us our own even this side of heaven!"

Then the Spaniard fairly trembled, for Mr. Ripley, all doubt removed, sobbed aloud. Mrs. Ripley handed the little garments again to Bernardo, saying, "I thank you; they may now be replaced." Then she turned to her husband, and Bernardo hurried away.

For days Max was kept in total ignorance of any of the developments concerning himself, and his parents were not allowed to see him except when he slept. They had seen him often when he was only as other boys to them, and now they could not understand why they had failed to be more keenly influenced by his presence than was the case. He seemed now to draw them to him with irresistible influence, and they longed with a great longing to have him know them.

The sick boy's improvement gradually became an assured fact, though it was known that weeks must pass before he could travel. Several of these had gone by before the physicians were willing that his mind should

be taxed with disclosures of a personal nature, and the Ripleys were eager with joy when at last this was allowed.

Bernardo was commissioned to break the news of his identity to Max, and, with a tact which no one else could have equalled, he related the facts which we already know.

"And I am not Max Anthon, but Malcolm Ripley!" the boy said, gazing at Bernardo. Then he added: "Lock the door, please, Bernardo. Do not let any one come in till I say they may. I must believe it all before I see any one."

Bernardo turned the key in the lock, and again sat by the bed.

"It seems so strange that I have a mother," Max said; "a mother, like Terry Kirtman has. Why, Terry is my cousin, isn't he? And his mother is my aunt! I am glad of that; I always did love her. Mrs. Ripley is a pleasant lady, and I like Mr. Ripley, too. Shall I call them mother and father, Bernardo? But of course I shall! I used to hear the Kirtmans talk about that little baby and the Chinaman — and no one dreamed I was the little baby, did they? It is all so strange! But listen, Bernardo; my own father and mother never can make me forget the father we buried out in Colorado, you and I. And they can never make me forget you. I love you best of all the people in the world, and if they carry me away to New York, I mean to get them to let me spend every vacation with you."

The sick lad's hand stole its way into Bernardo's, and the boyish outbreak was like refreshment to the weary thoughts of the Spaniard.

They talked together so long that Dr. Chellway became uneasy. But he would not allow anyone to go to the room until Bernardo called, and he finally forced himself to stop walking up and down the hall.

At last the longed-for summons came, and Mr. and Mrs. Ripley entered the room with Dr. Chellway. So perfectly had the physicians impressed the necessity of calmness, that the meeting of Max and his parents was almost prosaic. The boy was shy, and Mr. and Mrs. Ripley were anxious lest he should be unduly excited. The visit was short, and Max was almost glad to be left alone with Bernardo.

Hugh Kirtman in California, and all the people at Overbrook, were overjoyed at the news concerning Max and the Ripleys. Hugh felt that he had lent a hand in discovering his uncle's son, and was glad that the boy he knew as Max Anthon was that son. He wrote that he expected to make a visit East the next year, and that he hoped to see Mr. and Mrs. Ripley and Max-Malcolm Ripley at his home. He was doing well with Dr. Bardeen, who gave him many advantages, and thought he would become, in future years, a fine physician.

When Max was able to travel, his parents decided to go with him to Overbrook, thus breaking the long journey to their own home, and at the same time giving a pleasure to many friends. Bernardo was to remain at Baltimore a week, having been prevailed upon by Mrs. Vann to make them a visit. This lady felt the strongest liking for the Spaniard on account of his devotion to her brother's memory, and she assured him that her home would be his welcome abiding-place whenever he would honor them by staying there.

Bernardo spent seven happy days in the home of the Vanns. The simple fact that he was near relatives of Mr. Anthony gave him pleasure, and he was happiest when talking with the family about the years he had lived with his friend. Mrs. Vann wept over his description of how he read his first Bible verses at her brother's grave, and of how Max prayed. So softened was the heart of the hitherto haughty lady that she begged Bernardo to tell her how her brother had finally gained his consent to read and embrace the truths of the Bible.

That was at night, out on the flower-

scented piazza, and Juvernia felt her heart thrill. Surely her mother would hear about these things now, and be persuaded to give her love to Jesus. She listened with her heart in her happy eyes, yet fearing lest Bernardo should not be enough in earnest. She need not have feared. The man who was to carry the story of God's love to people who had wronged him, recognized the starving soul in a Christian land, and he fed it. Mrs. Vann heard his words, and Mr. Vann heard, and before he slept that night he started out on a life of companionship with the Friend who "loveth always, and faileth never."

Mrs. Vann heard her husband through, when he told her of it, and then said, timidly:

"You and Juvernia would better join the church together. Perhaps when you have prayed many times for me, I too may feel the happiness you say you feel. I suppose God has quit loving me."

"I don't believe that, Ophelia," Mr. Vann said. "Did you not hear Mr. Barez quote that verse where God says, 'I have loved you with an everlasting love'? He loves you now, and I shall never think you could fail to love him."

When Juvernia talked with her father the next day, and knew that she could join the church with him, her delight was so infectious that the whole household felt it. Yet a day of fuller joy came to her. Bernardo talked so convincingly to Mrs. Vann of all the goodness of God and of what he is to those who love him, that her proud spirit humbled itself in confession and in sorrow for the past, and was blessed as He who is faithful always blesses.

Juvernia knew then that there would be no further objection to the dedication of her voice to God, and it seemed to her that earth was almost like heaven, so far as her life was concerned.

"Mr. Bernardo," she said, using the name unconsciously, "did you tell me Uncle Tom said it was Max's innocent, trusting love that turned his heart to God?"

"Those were his very words," the Spaniard answered.

"Then I shall never murmur at any trouble that comes to me," she said. "Just think!—the Ripleys lost their baby in a storm at sea; it was terrible, but they trusted God. Then the baby was adopted by a very unhappy, wicked man, and was the cause of making him understand the love of God for people. He did a great deal of good, and led Max and you, at least, to give your love to God. You have taught my father and my mother to become Christians, and you are going out to your own people to teach them. I think that hundreds of people out there will hear the good news from you and learn to know God. And all of it will have come from just one trouble which God blessed. Do you not see? I thought it all out to-day. Is it not a beautiful unfolding?"

"Indeed it is; and not half of its beauty can ever be known until we all gather where we shall behold Him as He is, and see Him finish the unfolding," Bernardo said.

He was right, of course, yet he and Juvernia both lived to see more of the unfolding even in this life. Julia McAwtry profited by its sweet influence, and Ray Elliot also. Ray asked Don's pardon like a hero for having been so ready to speak evil of him, and both boys wondered much about the mysterious "Don" whom all Mr. Elliot's efforts failed to discover.

Max became the happiest boy to be found, as he himself declared, and he made two visits a year to his Overbrook friends, Juvernia generally happening there about the same time.

Bernardo delivered the ebony box to Mr. Ripley's care, stipulating that Max was not to know of it until the time set by Mr. Anthony. This promise was faithfully kept, and Bernardo himself came from his loved work in Mexico to be present at the birthday festivities.

THE END.

THROUGH THE HEART OF ENGLAND.

BY ALICE LORRAINE GRIGGS.

WHERE lies the heart of England? In the great busy city of London, with its wonderfully varied life, its hurrying millions of people? No, far from there. It is to a quiet shire lying about midway between east and west that the title of "the heart of England" has been given. Justly given it is, for this shire, which bears the magic name of Warwick, seems to hold within itself most of the chief charms and beauties of England. In Warwickshire, softly-rolling meadows and golden grain-fields, divided one from another by fragrant hedgerows, and diversified by leafy lanes and spreading elms, in whose branches rooks have built their nests from time immemorial, make up a landscape full of quiet beauty. Through the county flows the River Avon, winding about the base of low hills, and past quaint old towns, whose histories run back for hundreds of years; its waters mirroring now the stately walls of some country-seat, now the beauty of some peaceful woodland spot.

At one point of its course the Avon sweeps past the gray walls of Rugby school, and bears upon its waters the boats and canoes of the Rugby boys. Farther on, it flows about the base of Warwick Castle, one of the finest of the old English strongholds. But chief among the places of interest upon the banks of the Avon is Stratford. For Warwickshire is Shakespeare's land, and legends and traditions of England's great bard cluster thickly about the old town where his life began and ended. The house in which he was born, the church where he lies buried, the cottage where lived his wife, Anne Hathaway, before her marriage — all these are scenes of the greatest interest to travelers, who visit them as though they were shrines.

But there are other names and other memories than Shakespeare's connected with the history of Warwickshire. The quiet fields and meadows have been more than once the scene of terrible conflicts between the kings of England and their rebellious subjects, while the very name of the shire, and of its capital, calls up the memory of the great Earl Warwick, "the king-maker," the powerful warrior who placed kings on the English throne at his own pleasure.

A little to the north of the River Avon lies the town of Kenilworth, one of the most famous spots of all Warwickshire. It is only a straggling village, whose rows of ancient cottages, red-gabled and built of timbers blackened by age, look quaint and curious enough to our modern eyes. But the interest of Kenilworth is not in the village itself; it is in the ruined castle from which the village takes its name.

It was "long, long ago," as the old song says, — more than seven hundred years ago — that the first massive walls of Kenilworth were raised. Evidently it was meant that the castle should be a stronghold capable of withstanding any sort of attack, for a part of these ancient walls, in the shape of a square tower, still bids defiance to wind and weather. The history of Kenilworth Castle has been full of change and excitement. At times it was in the possession of powerful nobles, whose followers were the scourge and terror of the whole country round about, because of the ferocity and recklessness with which their foraging parties plundered

and destroyed. Then, again, it was the property of the kings of England, and splendid tournaments were held in its great tilt-yard. Almost every owner added to the castle, till at last it came to be a magnificent residence, the finest in all England, as well as a strong fortress. It was during the reign of "good Queen Bess," when the castle belonged to one of her courtiers, the Earl of Leicester, that Kenilworth was at the height of its glory and splendor. Then, as the old surveyors tell us, it included within its walls a circuit of nineteen or twenty miles, "in a pleasant countrey, the like, both for strength, state and pleasure, not being within the realm of England."

In 1575 Queen Elizabeth visited Kenil-

worth, where she was entertained magnificently for more than two weeks. There is a quaint account of her visit in an ancient letter written by one who was at the castle at the time. As she drew near the outer walls, the trumpeters who stood upon the walls, "being six in number, each eight foot high, with their silvery trumpets, of a five foot long, sounded up a tune of welcome." Then, as the queen and her retinue, having passed through the outer gateway, approached the inner walls, a floating island appeared in the moat or lake that surrounded three sides of the castle, and a beautiful girl, representing the Lady of the Lake, bade the queen welcome to Kenilworth.

When Cromwell became the head of the state, he gave Kenilworth to his generals, who reduced the beautiful castle to ruins in a very short space of time. They stripped it of everything that could be turned into money, and then left it to go to pieces, so that to-day it is only an imposing pile of ruins.

As in the days of its glory Kenilworth was the noblest mansion in England, so now in its decline its ruins are more impressive and beautiful than any others in the country. Crumbling walls are all that is left of the stately halls where the sovereigns of England have been entertained, while only broken arches remain to tell of the great gateways through which brilliant trains of knights and ladies have passed. Over tower and doorway, ruined wall and crumbling window-arch, all of a uniform pale-red tint, the ivy throws its drapery of living green, rounding and softening the sharp edges of the masonry, and adding its fresh beauty to the mellow tints of the ancient stonework. Once Kenilworth was guarded at every point by outjutting towers of defence, while everything necessary to it, as a fortress or as a residence, was contained within the sweep of its battlements. Now its towers are fallen, its protecting walls have mouldered away, and the old castle, once the scene of gayety and splendor, is at the mercy of wind and weather, a mournful but magnificent monument to its own former greatness.

Yorkshire, the largest county of England, which lies northward from Warwickshire, has also some beautiful ruins, not of castles, but of ancient abbeys. And one of the finest of these is Kirkstall Abbey, a short distance from the busy, manufacturing town of Leeds. Kirkstall Abbey, like Kenilworth Castle, was built about seven hundred years ago. At that time there was a wonderful revival all through England, as well as on the Continent. The monasteries of the old orders, which had once been the homes of devout monks, had come to be nothing more nor less than palaces, where the abbots lived in all the stately magnificence of princes, while among the monks the spirit of religion seemed to have died out. So it happened that a band of monks, who were called Cistercians, from the place where they settled, founded an order of their own, which was to show to the world the true spirit of religion. After a time they attracted the attention of the world by the beauty of their lives, and Cistercian monasteries began to spring up all over Europe.

One of these monasteries was Kirkstall Abbey, whose ancient walls are now blackened by the smoke from countless factories in Leeds. But in those far-distant days when the Abbey was founded it was away from towns or villages, in the midst of a forest, where the only sounds that mingled with the matin bell were the singing of the birds, the sweep of the wind through the lofty tree-tops, and the murmuring of the River Aire. At first, the abbey, with its great church at one side, and its cloisters and other buildings for the monks and the abbot extending about the sides of a quadrangle, was severely plain in its style of architecture, for that was one of the rules of the order. These rules even forbade the

building of a tower higher than one story above the roof.

As time went on, however, even the stern Cistercians began to long for a little ornament, and so one thing after another was added. Delicate traceries of stone-work were fitted into the plain Norman windows, and another story was added to the low tower. This last addition proved a very disastrous one, for some years ago, a long time, of course, after the abbey was deserted by the monks, one corner of the foundation of the tower gave way, and two whole sides, and a part of the third, fell to the ground, partially crushing the church in their fall.

As at Kenilworth, so at Kirkstall Abbey, the ivy has taken full possession, and spreads its mantle of glossy green over walls and arches. In many places, too, the walls are overlaid with soil, in which shrubs and trailing vines have taken root, making a crown of green for the gray old ruin, and festooning the stately arches with which its galleries are lined. More than this, trees have taken root within the walls, and lofty elms with wide-spreading tops are in possession of the ancient aisles and chambers where once the monks held their devotions.

To those who have made a study of such things, Kirkstall Abbey is deeply interesting, for its mouldering walls still show the ancient arrangement of the Cistercian abbeys. From them one may trace the different parts of the abbey, the cloisters, the business-room, the dining and sleeping halls, in fact all the many rooms that went to make up one of the great monasteries of bygone days. For the history of Kirkstall Abbey is written. Like Kenilworth Castle, it is now only a voice out of the past, telling to those who choose to listen its story of days that have long since passed away.

A Patriot Still.

By ANNA MAY WILSON.

A BROAD window, daintily curtained with white, is thrown open to admit the crisp morning breeze. Out of it leans a youth, a mere boy of eighteen, and the light wind plays through his waving hair, and kisses his heated brow. His cheek is flushed, and his eye glows with unusual fire. One shapely hand rests on the cold steel of an old-fashioned rifle that lies across the window-seat. It is his dead father's rifle. Its touch thrills him to the heart, for Harry is the last of a line of soldiers.

The poor, well-nigh useless old weapon, whose iron throat has long ago echoed amidst the din of battle waged for the right, seems to speak to him, to beckon him on. He presses it to his hot cheek, his burning lips. He sees the smoke of conflict, hears the deep roll of drums, and the measured tread of moving hosts. He looks on heavy ordnance, on prancing war-horse, on fluttering pennon and proudly-floating flag. Then the vision fades, and he sees but the gray mountain-side, at the edge of the peaceful town; he hears but the sound of one lone bird, twittering sleepily in the copse above.

Other thoughts come to him. He sighs, and his head droops. He is the support and comfort of his widowed mother. She lies

sick and feeble in an adjoining room. Can he be true and leave her? Yet can he be a patriot and go on, day by day, to the musty office, while others fight for his country's honor?

He lays his brow on the old rifle. A lump rises in his throat. A dull pain gnaws at his heart, and his lip trembles. Oh, it is too much, this sacrifice of every aspiration, every longing of his soul! How can he see the flag sweep proudly over field and flood, and he not there to strike for humanity and for his beloved country? But his mother! How could he trample her heart amidst the dust of the battle-field!

Presently he arises. From a slender glass, he takes a sweet, pink rose-bud. He enters his mother's room, and the pale face on the pillow lights up in a fond smile, a mother's smile. He kisses her, and drops the rose-bud by her cheek. He tries to speak, but cannot. Then he buries his face in the pillow. Her thin, white hand rests on his soft hair. She seems to be reading his thought.

"My boy would be a soldier?" she asks.

He makes no reply.

"Your own reason must decide this, darling," she says, in a low voice, tremulous with anxiety. "No son of mine must be a slave. You are free, Harry." Her voice breaks in a sob.

He raises his head, and gives her one piercing look. Then his face fills with determination. His lips touch her brow.

"Mother," he whispers, "brave little mother, my place as yet is beside you."

Her face lights up in glad surprise. Then as it comes to her what this sacrifice has cost her boy, the tears rise like a mist before her.

"My boy, not all the brave ones go to war. Remember, you are a patriot still. I may not long be with you, Harry, yet should the need become greater, should the worst befall our land, though it were my dying day, you shall go with my blessing."

As she speaks, the red rim of the sun appears above the mountain. The golden light strikes through the sprouting tree-tops, clothing the hill-side in a trembling veil of green-gold. The birds sing, the leaves quiver, as though Nature rejoiced in the triumph of moral courage in this mother and her son.

The days pass on. A time comes when Harry sits in his little office, with its one window looking down upon the street, while all the town is hastening to the depot, for the soldiers are leaving for the front. The troops are passing. Just once he goes to the window. The boys, his companions, trudging along with rifle and knapsack, glance up at his window. He waves them good-by. He cannot trust himself to go to them. Then he hurries to his desk and bends his head low over his account-book. He does not see the figures there, and a hot tear blots the page. That tear to him is more than his warm life-blood. The soldiers have gone, with the blare of bugles and the beat of drums, but behind, obscure, unnoticed, hampered by four dingy walls, sits the last of a soldier line — "a patriot still."

S0-DHV-242